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ABSTRACT

The Graded Objectives in Modern Languages (GOML) approach has contributed to the reform and development in the teaching of modern languages in the United Kingdom during the past 10 years. The introduction of shorter-term goals has revolutionized the way in which large numbers of teachers think about what should be taught to their students, and how it should be taught. This book sets out in detail where graded objectives have come from, what is happening now in terms of the latest developments in syllabus design, methodology and assessment, organization of materials, research areas, issues (i.e., methodology, grammar, and standardization), and where the GOML movement is going, particularly in light of the new national curriculum. Contains approximately 65 references. (LB)

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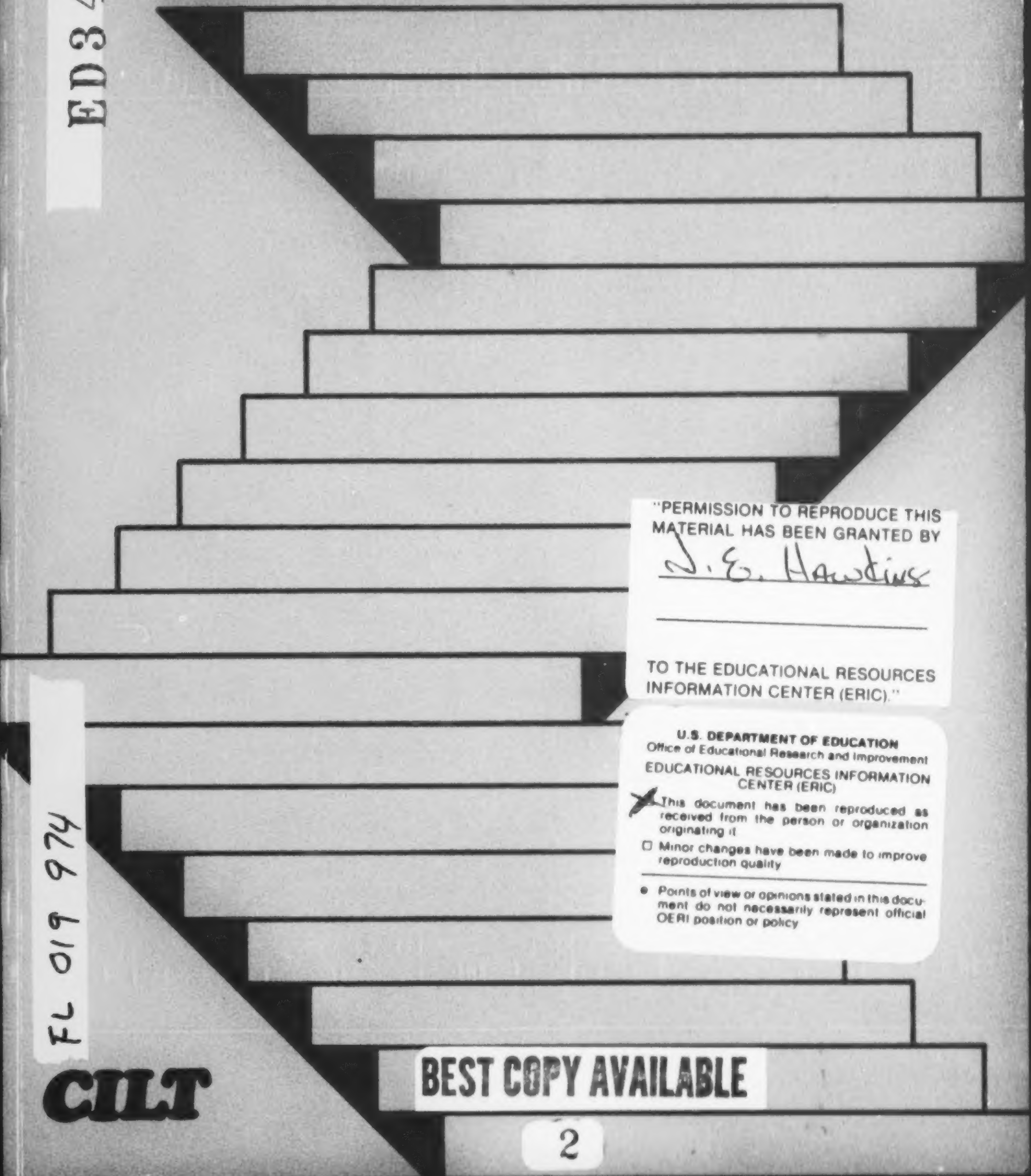
Brian Page and Derek Hewett

LANGUAGES STEP BY STEP:

graded objectives in the UK



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LANGUAGES STEP BY STEP

GRADED OBJECTIVES IN THE UK

BRIAN PAGE
DEREK HEWETT

CILT

CENTRE FOR INFORMATION ON LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH

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INTRODUCTION

THE BEGINNINGS

The basic principles of the graded objectives for modern languages idea were first expressed in opposition to plans for a new national examination to be taken at age 16+. The feasibility studies carried out in 1972-74 to see if it would be possible to examine the ability range implied in the then current national examinations CSE and GCE 'O' level produced specimen examinations which seemed to many of us at the time just as irrelevant as the ones they were intended to replace. Those studies did not, in the end, lead to new examinations and it was almost ten years before another, more successful attempt was set in train resulting in the General Certificate of Secondary Education (see section V). They appeared unsatisfactory because they did not take into account the changed nature of the language learning population in our secondary schools. In the early sixties only about 30% or so of the secondary school population (those in grammar schools and a selected few in some secondary modern schools) were offered the opportunity of learning a foreign language. By the mid-seventies this figure had increased to about 90%. This enormous success was obscured for many by what appeared to be an impossibility to get much that was worthwhile taught to the majority. The failure of most pupils to find the learning tasks presented to them relevant, meaningful or satisfying was only matched by their apparent inability to demonstrate an acceptable performance in the tasks. Teachers were clearly aware of the problems and courses, conferences and publications on teaching the less able were very popular. Nevertheless, even where real efforts were made in in-service training there often remained a sense of aimlessness and frustration among both teachers and taught. The only overt statement of aims of language teaching in the schools was provided by the requirements of the national examinations and they were seen increasingly to be unsuitable. Sometimes after only one year of language learning, inevitably after two or three, pupils were given tests to see if they were likely to pass CSE or GCE 'O' level. This obviously led to a large number of pupils being set inappropriate tasks at which, not surprisingly, they failed. This policy of elimination of the majority by setting them tasks intended for the minority led to a situation where, on average, only a quarter to a third of the age group were still studying a modern language after two or three years of learning and where only an estimated 12-15% achieved Grade C or better in 'O' level or Scottish O Grade and 10-15% more achieved a CSE Grade 2 or below or Grades D and E in

'O' level/O Grade. By 1986 those figures had improved slightly, particularly in areas where graded objectives schemes or other specific attempts to cater for the whole of the ability range had been substituted.

The introduction of CSE in England and Wales in 1964 was intended to allow a much greater slice of the population to leave school with an examinations certificate proving satisfactory performance in the one or more subjects the pupils had chosen. One might have expected this innovation to have resulted in a greater differentiation of objectives for different levels of ability, but the power of the traditional examinations remained too strong. In spite of some attempts to introduce new types of tests, modern language examinations syllabuses at all levels remained very heavily weighted in favour of the formal grammatical accuracy that had always characterised the aims of grammar school language learning. The Scottish alternative O Grade offered an examination based on communicative language, and some English examination boards introduced over the years alternative syllabuses or limited innovations which went some way to introducing communicative tasks particularly in speaking and listening tests. The majority of pupils still learning a language after four or five years continued, however, to take examinations in which, at best, 'language in use' played a minor part and, at worst, scarcely existed at all. Meanwhile, for the remaining two-thirds or more, such changes were irrelevant: they had already been deemed incapable of following an examination course. Neither did they receive any credit, however limited, for their two or three years of language learning.

The new 16+ examination proposed in the early seventies seemed to ignore all these problems. First, it took for granted the principle of the five-year course which must be completed before a public examination could be taken, in spite of the fact that a five-year course was inappropriate for most language learners in the new secondary schools. Consequently, teachers began to feel that it was both wasteful and illogical to start pupils off on a course two-thirds of them would choose not to complete. Moreover, it was apparent that it was harmful as well since they gave up with a negative feeling that they were not good enough to continue. The first principle of the graded objectives idea was therefore to break up the traditional five-year courses into a set of shorter term objectives that more pupils might reach and so experience success in language learning. Each of these goals was to lead to the next and each was to build on its predecessor.

The nature of the skills to be learnt for public examinations also seemed ready for reappraisal. The idea of languages as a vehicle for the communication of meanings, which had found some limited expression in the greater emphasis placed on oral skills in most examinations, needed to be taken further. The projected 16+ examinations seemed, however, to differ little in this respect from the already existing CSE/GCE 'O' level. The movement for a defined content syllabus, which had gained considerable strength by that time, also prompted the idea that objectives generally might be more clearly defined so that pupils would know more precisely what it was they had to learn to do. The most worthwhile objective seemed to be the ability to use the language for realistic purposes rather than, for example, the ability to manipulate the grammar of the language irrespective of meaning, or use it in ways which the actual user would rarely need to employ. The second principle of the graded examinations scheme was therefore that objectives should be communicative and behavioural, that is, they should be defined in terms of what communicative tasks a candidate would be able to perform in the language. Furthermore, these definitions should be as detailed as possible.

It was clear that communicative competence in practical situations (for this is what the objectives turned out to be) was a skill needed by all language learners and not simply by those who would opt out after two or three years. Graded objectives therefore would not be tied to an ability range: they would not be specifically aimed at low ability learners. They would represent steps in a continuum which could be attempted by all learners, who would need longer or shorter periods to achieve their objectives according to how much time they could devote to their studies or how much native ability they might possess. Slow learners might take a year to acquire what a sixth-form beginner of above average ability might cover in half a term. It followed then that the objectives should not be tied to an age range either, so that learners, in school or out, of any age, would be able to attempt any level of which they might think themselves capable. Thus the third principle was established: that graded objectives would not be aimed at a particular age or level of ability but would be available to both adults and school pupils irrespective of their perceived ability. It was hoped that this would not only encourage learners by giving them a definite feeling of success in the early stages of learning but would also help them to think of continuing to build on their studies later after leaving school, or to pick them up again if they had, for some reason, been obliged to drop them. It was thought also that the scheme might encourage the learning of languages other than French by providing publicly recognised qualifications for shorter periods of study.

In 1974 Harding and Page reviewed the situation and made suggestions about the possible contents of the first three grades of graded objectives schemes. This prompted the creation of the first syllabuses and tests produced by two separate groups in Oxfordshire and York after the setting up of working parties in 1976. Other groups rapidly followed suit so that Harrison (1982) reported that in 1978 alone 25 groups were formed. At the time of writing (1987) 81 groups are in existence of all sizes and composition (see section I).

When the first groups were being set up the teachers understandably felt that the most pressing need was to provide motivation where it was lowest both for them and their pupils - among the less able and particularly among those who were likely to opt out of language learning after two or three years. Consequently, the early schemes were first used with those groups. The Oxfordshire scheme was initially aimed deliberately at the less able and the York scheme, though intended for the whole ability range, was in practice confined to them at least at the beginning. The two original schemes, Oxfordshire and York, illustrate in themselves the dual development that has since taken place. Oxford soon widened its target population to include the more able and rapidly expanded to test five languages including Chinese. York created more levels and was among the first to forge a link with the public examination system through its creation of a Level 4/Mode 3 CSE and a Level

5/Mode 3 16+ examination which qualifies successful candidates for either GCE 'O' level or CSE.

The enthusiastic participation of teachers in the work entailed indicates the confidence and commitment that has been built up in a scheme which has changed the philosophy of language teaching and learning in fundamental ways. First, the graded objectives idea starts from the conviction that virtually all learners can attain some measurable standard of achievement in learning a modern language. This achievement is to be seen as the successful completion of a series of defined tasks in communicative situations. Second, learners are not seen as competing against each other, as in the norm-referenced system current in public examinations, but rather they are required to fulfil a set of criteria, that is to perform a number of tasks to an agreed level of efficiency. Third, the nature of the tasks, the ways in which they are to be carried out and the performances that are to be regarded as successful are known to the candidates before the tests are taken. Both teachers and learners know exactly what it is that is expected of them. There are analogies here with the driving test and, on a more significant level, with tests taken by apprentices. Ideally, it should be possible to take the tests at any time when learners feel they are ready. In spite of the organisational problems involved, this is now a feature of a growing number of schemes. The iron rule of the end of year or end of term examination being the only occasion when formal assessment can be made irrespective of the point reached in the learning process by any particular pupil is definitely being breached.

The work of the groups continues to develop. In one direction, the nature of the new national examination has been profoundly influenced by the experience gained in graded objectives work and groups continue to produce Mode 3 examinations as the final level of their schemes (see chapter V). In what seems almost an opposite development many groups are simultaneously making their systems more flexible by introducing modular forms of assessment, more continuous assessment and more mixed-skill tests and teaching materials (see section I).

The influence of the graded objectives 'philosophy' is then to be seen everywhere - in public examinations, in published materials and in the general preoccupations of language teachers, particularly in the schools. It is undoubtedly true that the graded objectives movement has been a major influence in shifting the focus of language teaching over the last ten years.

I. REVIEW OF PROGRESS

SYLLABUS DESIGN

The groups of teachers intent on setting up graded objectives schemes found themselves having to answer the question 'what are we going to teach?'. That is, what are we going to put into a syllabus? Apart from those who had devised Mode 3 schemes, a relatively small number at the time, most teachers had never had to concern themselves with the design of a syllabus. This had usually been effected by some outside agency. The most powerful was and remains the public examination system providing examinations usually taken by learners at the age of 16+. At that time past examination papers suggested, often without much precision, what a pupil was supposed to know in order to attempt them successfully. Regulations, examiners' reports and other documents usually revealed a little more. Some boards specified a lexical and/or grammatical list. All these sources provided a testing syllabus, an inventory of items expected to be known, whilst teaching syllabuses, an arrangement of these items (or a broad generalisation encompassing the requirements of most examinations at a given level) in a graded order suitable for presentation by the teacher to the pupil, was usually provided by the textbooks. Most teachers supplemented textbooks with various sorts of ancillary material, but the textbook course provided the backbone which ensured a systematic coverage of whatever points the textbook writer had considered appropriate for pupils to learn. In spite of apparent differences of approach and much radical difference in method of presentation, all such systems followed a similar principle because they shared a common view of language learning which implied a particular sort of objective. The objective at that time was derived from the view that sees language as a system to be mastered like a mountain that has to be climbed. This was the view of the classicists teaching Latin and Greek and was still the view that inspired virtually all teaching materials and examinations in the mid-seventies. As the climber moved from the easier slopes to the more difficult, so the learner moved from those parts of the language which were judged structurally and conceptually easier to master to those which were more complex. The path was long and arduous and many fell by the wayside - about two-thirds of our school population in fact. John Trim has described this as the *gradus ad Parnassum* approach. A major drawback was that you could not really admire the view until you had reached the top. You might be allowed some glimpses on the way, but the main preoccupation was with the difficulty of ascent. Pupils who gave up language learning before the end had quite often little to show for it in terms of language useable in practical situations. Frequently, therefore, they also had negative feelings about their own capacity for language learning since they had spent a good number of years on it and had apparently learnt nothing worthwhile. The audio-lingual and audio-visual revolutions changed this situation only marginally as they were concerned mainly with method and how to present material to the learner. Similarly, the growing concern with oral efficiency had meant a shift of emphasis in the skills learnt and some consequent change in content, but the approach had remained much the same. The partitive article in French might be taught through a shopping scene instead of a set of translation sentences, but the objective remained the learning of the article.

Now the teachers were going to try to specify communicative objectives and that required the application of a completely different set of criteria. Instead of looking at the language as a total system to be learnt, they had to look at it as an instrument for conveying meanings and those meanings would arise out of the needs the learners would have. What were their needs? What did they want to use the language for? These were the questions we began to ask ourselves. Bertrand Russel (*An inquiry into meaning and truth*, 1940) had put the point very neatly in a book intended for philosophers, but this quotation at least was equally applicable to most language teachers:

> *'The purpose of words, though philosophers seem to forget this simple fact, is to deal with matters other than words. If I go into a restaurant and order my dinner, I do not want my words to fit into a system with other words, but to bring about the presence of food.'*

Thus when we utter language we are not usually concerned with consciously operating a system but with conveying a meaning. What are the implications of that for language learning? For the learners of a foreign language the meanings cannot be as wide as those of a native speaker. What then are their meanings going to be? What will they want to use the language for? Pit Corder (*Introducing applied linguistics*, 1973) makes this suggestion:

> *'The object in teaching a language, unless it is simply that of getting pupils over an important educational hurdle, is to enable the learner to behave in such a way that he can participate to some degree and for certain purposes as a member of a community other than his own.'*

The important words here are 'to some degree and for certain purposes'. It is for the syllabus designer to anticipate what that degree and those purposes might be for a learner and design a syllabus in accordance with them. There is, of course, no reason why such a useful syllabus should not itself also constitute the 'educational hurdle' mentioned by Pit Corder and, indeed, the evolution of the new GCSE out of the language learning debate initiated by the graded objectives movement shows how this can be (see section V).

It seems to have been taken for granted in the early days that the 'purposes' would be those of the foreigner operating in the country where the language is spoken. In their suggestions for the first three levels of a possible scheme, Harding and Page (1974) mention as one of the aims of the first level

> *'to show learners how to cope in a foreign country while possessing very few linguistic tools'.*

Similar aims are implied for the other two levels though not explicitly stated. This assumption is a natural one. The popular view of the successful language learner is one who can perform in the language, can deal with meaning in practical situations. A syllabus based on this sort of language use therefore carries conviction with language learners even if they have not an immediate need or opportunity to put the learning into effect. As far as school pupils are concerned, practical objectives having this sort of face validity were the ones set in the first syllabuses to be developed and predominate to this day. They tend to arise in the form of situations that pose a problem: you want to buy an ice-cream or a souvenir or find your way in a foreign town, how are you going to do that?

The first two groups, those of Oxfordshire and York, both worked on these assumptions. Later groups sometimes further defined and refined them. Lancashire, for example, included in its Level 3 'Living in a French-speaking household' and "Talking about the British'. Later groups often gave more specific detail still:

> "The situations are a mixture of:
>
> (a) a person visiting France or preparing for an exchange visit;
> (b) a person receiving recordings (individual or class) from individuals or groups in France;
> (c) a person receiving letters from a penfriend or exchange partner;
> (d) a person receiving an exchange partner in his home.
>
> (Leeds)

Usually the idea of an exchange of personal information is implied. Often this is made explicit:

> 'In the scheme two means of communication are highlighted:
>
> 1. the language used in 'personal' interaction;
> 2. 'transactional' language.
>
> *The first, personal interaction, deals with the language used in such exchanges as the giving and seeking of information about oneself and others, the expression of individual feelings, preferences, reactions and intentions, and the interaction with people on a 'social' level. The second, transactional language, deals with the more formal language used in such exchanges as the*

> *organising of transport and food, the obtaining of food and services and paying for these.*
>
> (Midland Examining Group Project on Graded Objectives)

Sometimes the linguistic implications of these roles are at least partially spelled out:

> 'French Level 1 : the learner is seen as a non-initiator responding to questions but not posing any except in commercial transactions and in asking directions.'
>
> (Leeds)

The York and Oxfordshire syllabuses differed in one fundamental way which was to characterise many of those that followed. There was, for reasons that have already been mentioned, a strong conviction that learners should be presented with as clearly defined an objective as possible so that they would know exactly what it was they would have to do. The test would contain nothing in topic, task, vocabulary or structure that they had not met in some form before. It would then be clearly seen whether the learner could successfully accomplish the task set without being distracted by being faced with unfamiliar words or situations. Consequently, the Oxfordshire syllabus listed every word that was to be known. York, however, aware that teachers had a diversity of materials in schools that they would not be able to change overnight, decided to limit their syllabus to the description of the tasks to be set. The problem of unknown words and situations was taken care of by the fact that all the teachers involved in the scheme were also on the working party devising the tests. It was perfectly possible therefore to veto items which had not appeared in the material encountered by any particular class. The Oxfordshire syllabus, then, listed all the words under topic headings (travel, shopping, or café/restaurant, etc). Complete lists of words and phrases were given under separate skill headings - Speaking, Listening, Reading. Writing was not included at that stage. Each column assumed knowledge of the previous one, i.e. the Reading column assumed knowledge of the items in the Speaking and Listening columns. Specimen test papers were included to show what sort of tasks were to be required of the learner though, in many cases, the phrases in the columns were sufficient to imply them. In Level 1 French under Travel, for example, there is listed in the Speaking column:

> Où est la gare/la gare routière/le métro, s.v.p.?
> *and*
> à quelle heure est-ce-que le train/le bateau/le car arrive à ...?

This syllabus was completely revised in 1983 (see below).

The York group, on the other hand, decided not to prescribe any content at all beyond listing the topics or tasks involved. These appear on the back of the certificate awarded:

> *'... candidates must demonstrate an ability to ... ask the way and understand directions, shop for food, souvenirs, postcards, stamps, etc, go to a café and restaurant, travel by rail or road, stay in an hotel, campsite or French home, youth hostel, ... take part in a simple conversation with a French speaking person who is trying to get to know them, ... read short stories and letters in simple French.'*

Even the first version of the syllabus for Level 4 which was accepted as a Mode 3 CSE follows the same pattern. Whereas situations and topics are listed, the language content is simply described:

> *'the structures and vocabulary in the test will be those required to cope in authentic French with the topics and skills in the syllabus.'*

It is significant that when the levels were opened to a much wider clientele it was found necessary to add lists of vocabulary and phrases. The current syllabuses now administered by the North Yorkshire Education Authority list phrases in English under the heading Oral (*ask if there is a train for Nice* (Level 2), *say you have a headache/ toothache/stomach ache/sore throat* (Level 3)), and in French under the other skills. There is still, however, no inventory of grammar.

The York Level 4/5 which was developed as a Mode 3 16+ to conform with the new criteria for GCSE follows those criteria in listing functions, notions, grammar, vocabulary, etc.

These two syllabuses had a considerable effect on subsequent ones, partly because they were the first to be used and partly because they were readily available, the Oxfordshire syllabus being published in 1978 and the York one being available through the generosity of the York group of teachers. The York tests were subsequently published in 1980.

About the time that these two syllabuses were elaborated the work of the Council of Europe began to be more widely known and it, too, had a very great effect on subsequent work in graded objectives schemes. It was obvious that the main spring of its work - the aim of language learning being communicative competence based on an awareness of learners' needs - was the same as that inspiring the graded objectives idea. The Council of Europe's work was, though, much more sophisticated and detailed and therefore provided teachers with concepts and a framework that had been lacking until then. The groups which immediately took up the Council of Europe's work and modelled their schemes largely upon it were those in Lothian and West Sussex.

It is extremely difficult to give meaningful extracts from the syllabuses created by their working parties. The pioneering work of John Clark, then Assistant Adviser in Modern Languages, Lothian Region, led to detailed syllabuses based on results obtained from a questionnaire to beginners in schools and on a consensus achieved between teachers. The syllabuses divide communication into three broad areas:

Interaction between speakers or writers.
Information; where the learner searches for, extracts, processes and uses information for her own purposes.
Interest; where the learner uses language for fun through reading stories, playing games, singing songs, etc.

The table of contents and the introduction defining the three parts were common to all the syllabuses, as were the definitions of the communicative functions and the general and specific notions. The first section (interaction) was the largest, covering sixty-two out of the seventy-one pages in the German syllabus and similar proportions of the others. The second section listed areas where background knowledge was expected: home and housing, shops and post-offices, streets and towns, travelling, school and education, holiday patterns, leisure time activities, food and drink, restaurants and cafés. In this section there was also given an indication of the sort of language activities involved in seeking, extracting and using information provided by authentic foreign material. The third section gave language activities that are interesting and pleasurable for their own sake: games, songs, reading, etc. The Lothian syllabuses were intended as checklists of what people should be able to do and should know at the various stages. The content was not sequenced.

The system was later refined and published as *Syllabus Guidelines 1, 2 and 3* (Clarke & Hamilton, 1984). The first volume is non-language specific and defines communication and sets communication objectives for each of the five stages. Some of these objectives are assessable (communication with speakers of the foreign language, communicative tasks), others are activities which involve communication but which would not lend themselves to assessment (communicative activities for pleasure, games, simulations and plays). The Lothian syllabuses place importance on significant elements that have been taken up by other schemes in various ways: the use of the foreign language not just as a tourist in the foreign country but with foreign speakers in the learner's country and as a vehicle for conveying information in the classroom; the involvement of learners in plotting their own progress through the use of self and pupil to pupil assessment using the pupil progress card; the idea of negotiation, even in limited ways, by the combined decisions of teachers and pupils about the elements to go on pupil progress cards.

A large quantity of support papers defining communication, describing how waystages and progress cards could be constructed, pointing out the purposes and possibilities of assessment, helped teachers to move into what was at the time a quite new and uncharted area of language teaching. The published syllabuses remain the most sophisticated and informative arising from the graded objectives schemes.

The syllabuses from West Sussex were almost as voluminous as those from Lothian and were worked out under the direction of Eric Garner, County Adviser for Modern Languages. He based his work directly on the work of the Council of Europe and acknowledged a debt to John Clark's work also. Again it is difficult to summarise. The testing syllabus for Level 1 in French occupies twenty-three A4 pages and there is a similar number of explanatory documents.

In particular those marked F/1/2 background and F/1/4 content and method, which have been updated since, deserve to be widely read as they constitute a distinct contribution to language teaching in a general sense as well as illuminating the particular problems implied in the graded objectives approach. In this scheme it was assumed that Level 1 would provide an appropriate goal for many pupils aged 8-12 in middle schools who had followed a French course for two years and for pupils in the second year of an 11-16/18 secondary course. The current Level 3 (1986 edition) 'represents a target which should be accessible to a majority of pupils in Secondary Schools during the stage preceding GCSE'. It lists contexts, language skills and activities, topics and settings, functions and notions (with typical exponents and some indication of grammar) and a lexical index.

The scheme set up in the East Midlands is unique in several respects. It was at the time the only scheme funded by a national examination board - East Midlands Regional Examination Board (EMREB) and has therefore produced regular reports on progress and on various other aspects like standardisation and motivation (Lees 1983a and Freedman 1981). There are two main ways in which this scheme was different from those that had preceded it. First, it has no centrally set tests. The syllabus guidelines for a number of units were agreed in consultation with the teachers in the participating schools and the teachers themselves then set the tests. These and their marking were subsequently approved at standardising meetings. Second, writing is included from Level 1 at least as an option. The decision to include writing was a deliberate one, but the form it took arose out of a practical problem. Dunning (1983) writes:

> *'To assess Talking by asking children to convey information to their partner without being reasonably sure that information being asked for was in fact being understood when received seemed tantamount to countenancing the asking of questions for the sake of asking questions. Yet we could not see any obvious way at such an elementary level of language proficiency of making performance depend critically on the aural perception of information. Hence the decision to require the children to make reminders for themselves in note form of the information they had received. From that it was a logical step to ask them to write up the information in the form of a written Report.'*

An additional writing requirement was also made.

> *'The additional requirement of the Scenario had no such logical basis: it was simply a device to require children to attend to the written forms of the language they were learning to speak.'*

This writing was seen to have a dual role as a grammatical check and as a discriminator:

> *'Grammatically the writing of the Report and the Scenario engages the children in focusing their attention on the differences in the spoken and written forms of the first, second (intimate and formal) and third persons of*

> *the verbs they are using. The written tasks function differently from the spoken tasks in another way as well: they help in the differentiation between the more and less able in the examined population.'*

These preoccupations are not mirrored consciously in the intentions of any of the other groups.

Functions and topics are given in the syllabus for each level along with a number of 'target sentences' which illustrate the sort of production that is required but which are not to be taken as precise formulations to be learnt. The syllabuses also give detailed instructions about how and when to assess.

York and West Sussex eventually produced syllabuses for a Mode 3 CSE and even Mode 3 'O' levels which were natural extensions of the syllabuses already described except that, in the York case, as has already been mentioned, the syllabus for Level 5 included vocabulary and grammatical lists. West Sussex has now entered the post 16 area with a prevocational module aimed at the 16-18 age range and linked to a TVEI scheme. The East Midlands group and Cambridgeshire have made proposals for Mode 3 GCSE which introduce a number of new procedures (see chapter V on GCSE).

Of this group, Oxfordshire is the only one to have set about a complete and radical reappraisal of its syllabus which was reissued in its new form in 1983. The system of having topics under which language items are arranged under three skill headings has completely disappeared, though a columnar presentation of the material remains.

The syllabus for French was first arranged in seven Communicative Areas later expanded to nine:

1. Getting on with people
2. Getting around
3. Arranging accommodation
4. Obtaining goods
5. Obtaining services
6. Expressing opinions and feelings
7. Narrating and explaining
8. Negotiating and persuading
9. Imagining through language

Under each communicative area tasks, structures and lexical items are arranged in columns. An indication is given as to which is required for receptive use only. The structures are represented by phrases in French, not by grammatical descriptions. Sometimes they represent grammatical topics in the traditional sense (*est-ce que vous avez de la/de l'/du/des...*), sometimes phrases which can be completed from a lexical set (*est-ce qu'il y a ... par ici*). The lexical items represent the words expected to be known and include, made obvious by being printed in boxes, phrases like *c'est dommage; je veux bien* which are not expected to be manipulated in any way or fitted into the structures. The syllabus introduction includes a discussion of types of syllabus and the reasons for arriving at this one, a statement of principles of communicative language teaching, extensive methodological suggestions in a section entitled 'Preparing to teach with the OMLAC syllabus', a note showing how it is artificial to differentiate too closely between the four skills, and suggestions for creative activities appropriate for each level. The levels for Spanish are similar, but those for German differ somewhat in the range and nature of the communicative areas. All this represents a considerable development from the original OMLAC syllabus.

The Lancashire Cumbria scheme was set up in 1978 and rapidly acquired unique features. Its levels of proficiency were from the beginning based on the assumed needs of pupils in specific situations.

The topics were similar to those already used in Oxford and York and the syllabus at each level was completely prescribed in terms of phrases and vocabulary. There are no functions, notions or grammar listed as such. The tests were centrally organised but not renewed every year; in fact, with minor amendments, they have remained substantially the same since the scheme first started. This enabled the ideal of flexible entry time to be realised. Teachers can decide at any time when they wish to take the tests; all they have to do is to apply to the Centre for them. All this is organised through the Centre for European Studies whose first director, David Peacock, was closely involved in setting up the scheme and whose work has been ably continued by his successor, Phil Wood, with the willing cooperation of local authorities and particularly local language advisers. The scheme rapidly grew as more and more teachers were involved in working parties and residential courses involved in elaborating the first syllabus and tests and subsequently in creating teaching materials. Within a year or so the scheme was the biggest operating and has continued to be so, involving now close on 150,000 candidates per year.

After the explosion of activity of the first two or three years the movement continued to grow, though not quite so rapidly, so that by 1986 over eighty groups were known to the GOML National Committee through the archive collected at the Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research. Many were derivative of those already in existence, most acquired features of their own. In choosing the following more recent syllabuses for description, we do not wish to imply that they are in any way superior or more innovative than others that we could have chosen. They simply illustrate most easily various developments which were often implied in the early syllabuses and which now have come to be definite, even main, features of the later ones.

Durham

The Durham syllabus exists at two levels, *Niveau Fondamental* and *Niveau Moyen*. In the Project Rationale, a preamble to the *Niveau Fondamental*, a number of threads found elsewhere are brought together as well as being added to by the Durham team. A brief background section mentions the Council of Europe work, with its concept of functions and notions, and points out the strengths and weaknesses of those concepts in the production of a syllabus for foreign language learning in a British secondary school. It sketches the emergence of graded objectives schemes and dispels two important misconceptions about them. They should not be seen as solely or mainly concerned with 'survival' language and they should not be divorced from 'real work' and therefore isolated from the main programme. This latter appears to be a misconception experienced by HMI who felt (in the Lancashire Cumbrian investigation) that it is best if graded test work is only part of the programme. If that is indeed the case, then the graded test syllabus is an incomplete one. The Rationale goes on to underline the independence of the teacher to determine what she wishes to teach, and to that end no prescribed teaching syllabus is produced. '*Participating schools will be required to construct their own teaching scheme based on the Project Rationale, syllabus outline and guidelines produced in a programme of in-service consultation.*'

Linguistic aims are not the only ones in this scheme. There is a deliberate inclusion and description of cultural aims (*the intention is to make clear that linguistic transfer involves the understanding of meanings within the context of the foreign culture*) and educational aims (*it is important that the process ... includes something of intrinsic educational value*). The need to encourage '*a sense of enjoyment in the learning process as well as a positive sense of achievement*' is also mentioned. All these aims echo those set out in the national criteria for GCSE. Subsequent notes on the background to the syllabus make it clear that it provides a checklist of items from which teachers are to produce their own teaching syllabuses and whatever intermediate assessments they consider necessary. The general aims are to enable learners to talk about themselves and their families, meet needs as potential tourists, and to use language for their own enjoyment in the shape of songs, drama, games, etc. There is a definite statement that, although the language is intended for communication, '*whether or not the pupils are likely to visit France, it is hoped that the course based on these principles will have intrinsic educational value...*'. Both levels are expected to take the average learner rather more than a year to achieve. *Niveau Fondamental* has eight general areas, of which seven are functions ('seeking and giving explanations', for example) and the last is 'using communicative strategies' - an interesting item which includes sub-skills like 'making conversation flow', which make the learner much more consciously aware of the ways in which socal interaction operates.

Under each general heading there is an array of columns detailing the Outline (the sub-skills or parts of the general heading), *Vocabulary*, *Structure*, *Cultural Notes* and *Applications*. The last two give details such as (under the heading *Meeting People*) 'shaking hands', ' kissing' in the *Cultural Notes*, and ' arriving in a French family', ' meeting French visitors' in the *Applications* column. Both, in giving an extra social dimension to language, are logical extensions of indications less fully worked out in earlier syllabuses.

An excellent section on classroom management, giving a very useful list of language items, is headed by a brief note which briskly puts the case and underlines the whole philosophy of the syllabus.

> '*It is true that if the primary aim is to teach the structure of the language, then time in the classroom is best used for the written practice of the perfect tense verbs with* être *or preceding direct object. If the main aim is to teach 'survival'*

> *language, then it is true that the classroom is not Boulogne, Calais or Dieppe. However, if the primary aim is the use of language for 'communication', then there is every justification for using the foreign language to organise classroom work, since the classroom provides the one possibility for real communication to take place.'*

It is significant that this statement, which echoes the principles of the Lothian scheme, also comes from an area from where it is that much more difficult to travel to France because of the distance from the Channel ports. The syllabus ends with a vocabulary list (ranged under topics), a grammar inventory arranged under traditional labels and cross referenced to the General Area section of the syllabus, and a list of items (menus, road signs, classroom notices) which are to be read. The syllabus is complemented by a booklet of assessment tasks and the teaching materials being produced. The language exponents given are to be regarded as a minimum testing syllabus; the pupil is expected to have a repertoire for expressing personal meanings and to be able to cope to some extent with the unexpected and the unknown.

Cambridge

While the Durham syllabus comes very much from an amalgam of the Lothian, Oxford and Council of Europe practice of giving theoretical underpinning and practical methodological suggestions as well as a set of situations, topics, functions, grammar, etc, the Cambridge scheme follows the York tradition of having its syllabus defined almost uniquely by the test items the candidate eventually has to face. In Level 3, for example, the tasks cover the usual tourist requirements of 'finding accommodation and food', and 'shopping', but add more specialised items like 'visiting a school', and there is a section on 'using French in England'. Each task is in fact a simulation and includes a series of sub-tasks which involve different roles for the learner. The only information about linguistic content is a very brief note entitled Structures accompanying each simulation. This lists for each task a group of phrases and lexical items that pupils do need to know for each sub-task in the simulation. In this case the evolution has taken place in the elaboration of the test instrument rather than in the development of the syllabus itself.

Buckinghamshire

The Buckinghamshire group is unique in having produced a basic syllabus in English which then provides the pattern for syllabuses in French, German (since 1985) and Russian and Dutch (since 1985/86). The format is in many ways similar to that of Lothian. In the first part, a list of functions is given under general headings: factual information, attitudes (emotional), attitudes (intellectual), attitudes (moral), suasion, socialising. Then exponents under each of these are set out in columns showing what is to be known at each of three levels and whether for receptive use only. In a second part, six general topic areas are listed: personal information, travel, socialising, health and welfare, shopping, services, with more specific items grouped under them. Exponents are again given in columns as in the first part. A final section which appears only in the foreign language versions of the syllabuses gives vocabulary under twenty-nine topic headings (clothes, times/dates, weather). There is no grammar inventory as such, though the exponents under functions consist frequently of grammatical items (e.g. inverted forms with question words: *ce/cet/cette/ces* + nouns) as well as other lexical items and phrases. Plans have already been made to convert the current Levels 1-3 into Levels 2-4, create a new lower Level 1 and a Foundation Level to be used in the county's middle schools. Spanish is to be added at all levels and the possibility of a modular Mode 3 GCSE is being canvassed. Some interesting new forms of assessment are being piloted which are intended to have a better backwash effect on teaching and to avoid the main criticisms voiced in HMI reports.

Croydon

The Croydon syllabuses, though following the usual pattern in terms of topics, are intended for both pupils and teachers. From Autumn 1987 five levels, incorporating all the National Criteria, have been available. Level 1 consists of ten units, later levels of five units each. Each contains, for the pupil, an explanation of the whole scheme as well as a syllabus, a checklist (rather like a progress card) and a description of the test. There is also considerable guidance for the teacher about the philosophy and approach implied, classroom activities and games, and all are cross-referenced to likely resources even down to the relevant page numbers of common textbooks. During 1987/88 development work will concentrate on a modular GCSE Mode 3 with 100% course assessment, the content of the modules being taken from Levels 3-5.

University of London School Examinations Board

The scheme developed very recently by the University of London School Examinations Board (GAMLL = Graded Assessment in Modern Language Learning) is not considered by its authors to be a syllabus at all but rather a scheme in which teachers and learners have considerable freedom to create their own syllabuses out of given elements. A Statement Bank lists functions and settings with some exponents. A Task Bank lists possible tasks (expressed from the learners' point of view) under general headings. For example, the general heading *Introducing yourself* has twenty-two possible tasks listed under it like 'I can spell my name', 'I can say what I look like'. These two resources are to be used by teachers in cooperation with pupils, if they wish, to create their own pupil progress cards if they do not want to use those already provided in the scheme. The Foundation Level has ten modules of the usual tourist type. It is split into two levels. Level 1 consists of a personal information module plus four others, Level 2 of the remaining five modules. Individual progress cards (*Cartes Bilan*) indicate the tasks to be completed but also include a space for learner comment:

Review of progress

I have enjoyed ...

I think I have done well or improved in ...

I think I still need to improve in ...

These techniques for making learners reflect deliberately on the quality and extent of their learning are similar to procedures in the OCEA scheme (see chapter V). The syllabus also contains suggestions for the length and nature of tasks as well as possible sources of relevant material in text books.

The decision by London to work with one of a number of languages which are used by distinct ethnic communities living in Great Britain and which are consequently familiar to at least some of the pupils in a normal classroom, is likely in the long run, in terms of helping teachers of **all** languages, to assist a more rigorous definition of what constitutes authentic communication.

Speakers of community languages after all find it easier and more relevant to specify purposes and needs for foreign language learning. The construction of a scheme of differentiated assignments which can relate to a wide range of levels of competence, whether taught or acquired naturally, is a challenge which teachers of community languages have been able to take up, although not, it must be added, without certain inherent difficulties, as is attested by the research and development officers from the GAMLL scheme.

Classes tend to vary extensively, for example, both in size and previous knowledge of Urdu, the target language. Some pupils understand Urdu more easily because they come from families where Punjabi is spoken, but for pupils whose families speak Bengali or Gujarati, Urdu is started as a foreign language. Other pupils may have learnt to read the Koran in Urdu at classes held at the local mosque, but they will not necessarily be able to speak it, and even those coming from Urdu speaking backgrounds are apparently not always accurate in their use of the language. The other problem experienced is that many teachers of Urdu tend to adhere to traditional methods of teaching, which conflict with the more pupil-centred, interactive approach characteristic of the scheme.

The London initiative is of course not the first Graded Objectives scheme to incorporate a community language into its range. Cambridgeshire, Lancashire/Cumbria and Manchester have one, two and five levels respectively of Urdu on line, and Dudley in the West Midlands has a 'framework of competence', described in English and which can be applied to any community language. This framework covers two stages of proficiency at present, but it is hoped to develop a third which will eventually key into GCSE.

Chinese is available in Oxfordshire and Berkshire, Modern Greek in Lancashire and Cumbria, and Polish is being planned in Croydon, without mentioning the many schemes which offer Spanish and Italian. In the case of the latter, syllabus design is predicated on use as a foreign language, but both Spanish and Italian are recognised community languages as well and if taught as such would require a quite different context.

Berkshire

The Berkshire syllabuses are the most recently developed (piloted in 1985 and official in 1986) of those analysed here. They have several distinctive features. Many early schemes started with Levels 2 or 3 since this post-beginners range was the most immediately needed. The Berkshire group started by defining Level 5. They intended their scheme to embrace five levels of which the last three would be the equivalent of appropriate sets of grades of the GCSE. They decided to accept the Council of Europe Threshold level as a suitable oral/aural goal for Level 5 that would have to be supplemented with 'substantial reading and writing goals'. This oral/aural specification was then divided into five cumulative levels. On piloting Level 1, it was found too demanding and a Foundation Level was created. The introduction to the Foundation and Level 1 syllabuses outlined several principles which guided the designers.

> *'The syllabus had to take into account the fact that young people develop and mature between the ages of eleven and sixteen. Such growth is multidimensional, and although no attempt was made to analyse the process, a general awareness of it was allowed at least in part to determine what the pupil might do and how he might do it.'*

The intention is expressed of 'helping to develop not only the ability but also the desire to communicate'. In Level 2 this particular phrase is expanded:

> *'... not only the ability but also the* confidence *and the* desire *to communicate'.*

This paragraph ends with a particular emphasis:

> *'However it is viewed, the intention is that the syllabus should encourage learning which is child-centred and not foreign country or structure lexis centred in the first instance.'*

It is evident then that the syllabuses are quite distinctly aimed at secondary school pupils and have a predominantly educative as well as communicative function.

The syllabus documents for each level form a similar pattern. Functions, general and specific notions are listed and sets of exponents given under functional and topic headings. Those required for receptive use only are indicated. At each level there is also a grammar inventory. At Foundation Level only oral/aural skills are tested. At Level 1 reading is introduced, but of a particular sort. The introduction to Level 1 says:

> *'It is intended that the recognition of "public notices" will be introduced in Level 2 and the reading of continuous texts in Level 3. The requirements for Level 1 are limited to what is considered to be a primary need and, at this initial level, a more readily generalised skill - ability to refer in speech to*

> *people, places and things whose "labels" have only been met in their written form.'*

The intention is for the learner to acquire the ability to 'translate symbol to sound'. To this end the learner is expected to cope only with single words and virtually all those listed in the Level 1 syllabus are proper nouns. In Level 2, single nouns or very short phrases of the public notice type are listed and complete sentences or pieces of continuous prose are not met till Level 3.

At present Foundation and three levels in French and German and Foundation and Level 1 in Spanish, Italian and Chinese have been published.

The Berkshire group have also set up different sorts of assessment and have produced considerable quantities of teaching materials.

Graded objectives syllabuses continue to evolve. It was a recognised principle from the beginning that we should not allow ideas to get fossilised. Groups have always been generous in sharing their experiences so that later schemes could take on the best of what had already been used and add new ideas of their own. It is through this process that the emphasis in recent schemes has moved from end of level tests to forms of continuous assessment, from teacher-directed systems to techniques involving greater pupil autonomy in learning and assessing. The annual weekend conference organised by the National Coordinating Committee for Graded Objectives in Modern Language Learning and the regular GOML Newsletter produced by *CILT* have both been very influential in stimulating the free flow of information and inspiration. Above all, however, it is the willingness of teachers to cooperate that produces the creative atmosphere necessary for the elaboration and execution of new syllabuses.

ASSESSMENT

As in the chapter on syllabus definition, so here the fact that the tests of a particular scheme have been used as illustration in no way suggests that they are better or worse than others, merely that they were convenient examples of similar techniques. Most schemes have new insights to offer in the matter of testing, but it is impossible to deal with them all.

Since the early articles and first syllabuses all suggested use of the language for everyday tasks in realistic situations as the content of the language course, it was natural that the tests should seek to simulate everyday situations even though these had been very rarely used in serious examinations up to then.

The first **York** tests set at Level 2 dealt with reading, listening and speaking separately. The reading tests started with public signs and notices and moved on to more connected utterances and adapted magazine articles and *fait divers*. The listening comprehension concerned mainly short dialogues which candidates were required to understand, and other simplified items like weather forecasts. The texts were recorded on tape by native speakers and played to the candidates in the examination room. In both tests a mixture of multiple choice questions in English and English questions to be answered in English was used.

The oral was also taped so that it could be marked later by the teacher who conducted it. It consisted of a group of questions on personal details and some role plays of the rigid type, that is, what candidates were required to say was given in English and they were not obliged to understand any of the responses:

> You are in a café:
> - ask for a ham sandwich;
> - say you would like a white coffee;
> - ask for the bill.

(Level 2: York test as published by Nelson 1980.)

The written tests were designed to take place in one lesson period so as not to require any reorganisation of the timetable, but the oral test did involve the teacher in a private tête-à-tête with a candidate which meant arrangements had to be made for the supervision of the rest of the class.

The **Oxfordshire** group produced an ingenious story-line type of examination for testing listening and reading in an attempt to make the activity seem more natural by putting it in a context. The candidate was assumed to be a member of a family going to France by car and was acting as interpreter. The test questions then dealt with signs and notices seen first on the ferry then later on roads and in a hotel, while the listening comprehension sections, interspersed chronologically with the reading ones, dealt with announcements, responses to questions for information and the securing of hotel accommodation. The teacher was required to read out from a prepared script the listening comprehension material. The tests are somewhat different in nature from those set in York. The reading comprehension consists of single words or phrases and contains none of the extended pieces found in the York test. On the other hand, the listening comprehension sections are sometimes quite extensive - three or four sentences is common - and are always directed at candidates in the situation in which they are supposed to be. There are no overheard dialogues.

The oral tests at Level 1 consist of role plays with the prompts in English and menus in French from which items given in English are to be selected and read out. In Level 2 there is also one role play where questions in French are set down so that answers can be prepared. In both cases the items are set in a story line in the same way as the listening and reading comprehension tests.

While not examples of a true integration of skills - since the use of one did not affect the understanding of another - these Oxfordshire tests did nevertheless represent an attempt to put a series of linguistic tasks in a common context that would give them a feeling of authenticity. In later versions of the orals the OMLAC examiners attempted to get away from the 'forced response' system of the rigid role play by various devices, many relying on pictures. One version had characters in scenes with empty balloons coming from their mouths; candidates were rewarded for any utterance which would be appropriate in the situation.

The **Lothian** scheme introduced several new methods of assessment. The final summative assessment of each Stage, which was centrally organised, was preceded by other more informal assessments arranged within the school by the teachers according to the demands of their own situation and teaching materials. These informal assessments took two forms, Waystage Tests which were arranged to check various units of work within the Stage syllabus, and Pupil Progress Cards. There were normally three to five Waystage Tests. The Progress Cards consisted of lists of tasks covering the communicative activities and functional content of each Waystage. Both were tied in closely with the materials available and therefore usually differed quite markedly from one school to another. Pupils themselves were responsible first for ticking the activities on the card when they felt capable of performing them and then presenting themselves for assessment by a teacher. This was one of the ways in which pupils were encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning.

The oral also contained new elements. The rigid, non-interactive role play was abandoned and replaced by one which demanded both a personal response from the learner and an understanding of reaction to what was said by the interlocuter, e.g:

> *The examiner is a grocer in a shop. You come in and wish to buy something for your dinner which you can eat and drink right away. The teacher will give you some foreign currency. You must do the following:*
>
> attract the grocer's attention;
> request something to eat;
> request something to drink;
> say how much you want;
> answer any questions you are asked;
> pay the correct amount and get change if necessary;
> take leave.

These survival conversation role plays were done between teacher and pupil, but at the same time there were assessments done between pairs of pupils which concerned other types of exchange. For example, instructions were given to one pupil to find the way to a place while the other one had a map showing it, or the pair had to find out from one another when it might be possible to go to the sports centre, each having a diary of their commitments for the week. When testing two learners at once in this way an obvious difficulty arises from the fact that their performances may be interdependent and a weak or defective contribution from one may prevent the other from performing adequately. This is countered in Lothian by an instruction to teachers that if it is difficult to assess a performance because of one partner's lack of ability the teacher should interpose and ask further questions.

The listening test is of two sorts. The first is similar to the Oxfordshire tests where there is a storyline requiring listening and reading comprehension of short items. In addition there is a listening test consisting of conversation involving candidates and from which they must acquire particular information. For example, candidates are assumed to be staying with a French family, they hear a short conversation between members of the family about where their English visitor might be taken on a day's outing. Similarly, a separate reading test requires understanding more extended items. In this case there is a further move toward authenticity in that the reading material is reproduced in the form in which it was originally found. Letters from pen friends appear in handwriting and advertisements or articles from magazines appear photocopied in their original form.

As well as these formal assessments (formal in the sense that marks were given and tests passed or not), teachers were encouraged to keep detailed records of individual progress in the various tasks and expected outcomes of the syllabus. In one of the early syllabus documents the following were listed as the areas in which progress should be noted:

> Conversation
> Information processing - listening, reading

Information giving - speaking (monologue), writing
Correspondence
Project work
Language resource - pronunciation
 - grammar
 - vocabulary/phrases
Language awareness
Cultural awareness
Responsibility

It was suggested that each pupil should keep a Language Resources Booklet where *'elements they are learning (listed according to the functions they carry out, the semantic areas they belong to and the part of the grammatical system they enter into)* 'are recorded. The teachers are also encouraged to assess themselves:

> *'through a self critical approach, through examining whether the pupils are in fact achieving the objectives sought, through asking the pupils for their reflections upon the materials and activities, the teacher is encouraged to evaluate what has been done so that appropriate changes can be made. Nothing should be static. Curriculum development is an evolutionary exercise necessitating continuing revision of aims, syllabus, materials, methods and assessment.'*

While this call to permanent revolution might well be prompted by the fear of ossification of poor or imperfect systems, nevertheless, it is only possible for those of virtually unlimited energy. After the first enormous effort of creating new syllabuses, types of tests and assessment systems, it was found difficult in most schemes (the exceptions will be mentioned later) to revise them except in fairly superficial ways.

These three early sets of assessment instruments raise virtually all the problems that subsequent schemes have attempted to solve. Some of them revolve round the search for authentic tasks - that is, to make what is required of the learner presenting herself for assessment an activity which is as far as possible one she would likely to be required to perform if she was using the language in a natural situation in the country where it is spoken. It was for this reason that multiple choice questions, for example, were eventually rejected. They do not mirror real life activity except in very rare instances and so now they are almost never seen in graded objective assessment instruments. There have been criticisms on the same grounds of separate skill testing and the rigid role play which does not require understanding of the interlocuter's utterances. Indeed, the testing of speaking skills has been one of the most fertile grounds for experiment. The 'fly on the wall' technique of listening to dialogues between other people has also been rejected by some in favour of techniques which involve the learner herself in the dialogue.

Other developments concern two interrelated areas - the further evolution of the progress card system which allows greater self assessment by the learner as teaching is going on, and the growth of systems of continuous assessment or other forms of flexible assessment replacing end of year sets of examinations.

At the same time several paradoxes begin to appear. One concerns the effects of tests on the learner's learning. The rigid role play may require candidates to 'ask for a chocolate ice-cream' even if they don't like chocolate ice-creams. The open-ended role play requires them to 'ask for something to eat' meaning that from the repertoire of things to eat that they possess, they are to choose something they like and which they feel is suitable for the occasion. Of the two, the second is obviously the more communicative task. Consider, however, the backwash effect. Candidates preparing for the rigid role play know they may be required to ask for an ice-cream and the syllabus gives fifteen flavours. They learn them all in order to cope. Candidates preparing for the open-ended role play know they will be asked the general question and left to choose for themselves what they want to eat. They therefore learn only one ice-cream. Thereby the non-communicative test makes the learner acquire a much wider repertoire than the communicative test.

Another paradox arises from ideas about continuous assessment. There seems to be some confusion about precisely what the phrase means. It can be argued - the 'strong' interpretation - that continuous assessment should reward first '*pain*', then '*je veux pain*', then later stages right up to the final '*je voudrais du pain, s'il vous plait, vous avez une baguette?*'. In other words, it should reward the process of a learner's learning. In fact, continuous assessment schemes seem to be no different in nature from end of level tests in that they assess whether a learner can perform a particular task using language. Instead of being assessed on a large amount at the end of the year, the learner is assessed on a series of smaller amounts throughout the year. The tests are still summative but administered at more frequent intervals. In fact, this is the same process that led to graded objectives in the first place: instead of the five year course, a series of shorter courses was suggested. Now those are often found to be daunting and are divided into even smaller sections. The danger is, of course, that we may end up with an atomisation of a language skill. What would appear to be necessary is a system like that found in Lothian's first progress cards and now in several schemes like the revised OMLAC, in Cambridge and in the new Buckinghamshire one. In these cases candidates perform and are assessed on small tasks first and then on larger tasks which incorporate the smaller ones. If this can be combined with the Buckinghamshire principle of rewarding only repeated successful performance even of the larger tasks then the dangers of atomisation can be avoided.

A further paradox arises in the presentation of material to learners so that they can be assessed. It seems that the more communicative, the more task orientated a test attempts to be the more English appears on the test paper, assignment sheet or progress card. When administering the old fashioned test for translating sentences it was easy to begin with the instruction '*traduisez*' or its equivalent in whatever language was being tested. When the test implies a particular situation which has to be understood by the learner so that she can perform the task the instructions cannot be so simple:

> *You have lost your wallet and have gone to the lost property office to find it. You think you may have left it in the café you were in yesterday or the bus which you took to get back to where you are staying, (29 Rue Lamont, Renne). Your teacher will play the part of the person in the office and will ask you about what your wallet contains so be prepared to suggest at least three things that were in it and answer any other questions.*

If the instructions are set in the language to be tested then they risk being misunderstood and the test is rendered useless. Most schemes, as will be seen, have not yet solved this problem.

The first to make an attempt to deal with it was the East Midlands Group. This group was different from the others in several sometimes quite controversial ways: it was the only one, at the time, which was officially financed by a public examination board; it did not set any tests centrally but relied completely on teachers to set their own within guidelines; it intended to test writing from the outset. Like the others it used a form of role play for its oral testing but there was a strict injunction about the prompts: 'IN NO CASE WILL INFORMATION BE CODED IN ENGLISH'.

In the original pilot materials, the assessment is in two parts - Talking (so-called because it involves both speaking and listening) and Writing/Reading. The Writing/Reading can be assessed optionally and arises from the Talking.In the latest editions of the syllabus (1985) the Writing assessment has been broadened. At Level 1 it can still be a report based on the talking assessment but no longer includes the scenario. It can also be a response to the reading assessment text (a penfriend letter on a topic of personal information) or on a similar text. At later levels, it can be functional (replying to a letter or confirming a telephone message) or imaginative (for example an imaginary dialogue).

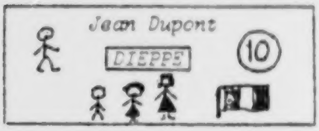
At Level 1 the Talking test is carried out by pairs of pupils whom the teacher assesses while taking no part in the exchange. The activity entails both seeking and giving information and arises from cue cards. At other levels the teacher is involved as facilitator in transactional exchanges. To avoid the use of English on the cards written French in note form is used or a set of symbols known to the participants.

Examples of the cards from EMREB Level 1

A. Matching cards

Both candidates have cards with similar data on them. The stimulus on the cards used for the exchange of information can be:

(i) mainly or entirely symbolic

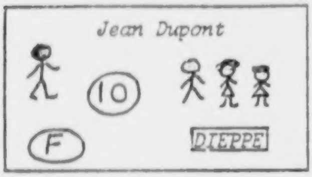


(ii) written in French

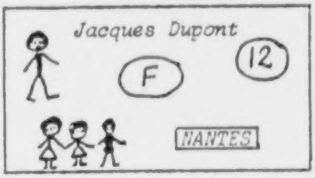
Jean Dupont. Français
Dieppe.
10 ans.
Un frère. Deux soeurs.

B. Mis-matching cards
Candidate A has a card with information about Candidate B, and has to check whether or not the details are accurate. Candidate B has a card with accurate information about him/herself and confirms/denies the accuracy of the information proposed.

Checking information



Confirming/denying accuracy of information



As far as is known only the revised OMLAC (Oxfordshire) scheme and recent developments in Lancashire/Cumbria have also attempted to solve the English prompt problem in this way. The activity takes place at any time convenient to the teacher at the end of the teaching of that particular unit and is usually carried out in the classroom while the rest of the class is engaged on other work.

Virtually all other schemes rejected writing as a skill to be taught and assessed in the earlier levels because it did not seem to be a sufficiently communicative objective. The writing of pen-friend letters, for example, was assumed to be appropriate for later levels only. Even where schemes have set up Mode 3 CSE or 'O' level equivalents, writing has frequently still been omitted because of the difficulty of finding suitable communicative tasks. The new GCSE requires a test in writing for the higher grades and there the tasks almost always consist of writing letters or postcards or leaving short written messages. The range of activities is fairly limited. Everyone is agreed that this does not mean, of course, that writing should not be used as an aid to learning, as part of the methodology, at any level of the course. Dunning (1983) recognises all these arguments but justifies the inclusion of writing in two ways. First, the framers of the scheme wanted *'a syllabus which would engage the whole ability range (i.e. which included those who would eventually take an existing GCE 'O' level)'.* Writing was therefore included to make syllabuses appropriate for higher ability ranges. This was an important point to make at the time when most graded objectives schemes were mainly finding their clientele among those of average and lower ability even if theoretically they were catering for all. Second, including writing arose out of the fact that there was no separate test of listening. (Op.cit. p 13.)

The writing activity in fact takes two forms: a written report in the third person of what was said and a scenario, a written account in direct speech of the exchanges that took place. It is a unique solution of the aural comprehension difficulty which no other scheme has taken up, presumably because it does not really solve the problem the Talking test is supposed to solve and poses new problems about 'authentic' activity. If candidates have to write down what they have heard in an oral/aural exchange in order to prove they have understood it, then it obviously is not conditioning their own oral output because their understanding could be judged by that if it did. The argument against the standard role play is not then met. Also, it is perfectly natural for a foreign speaker to write down in her mother tongue information gained from a native speaker in order to use the information or pass it on to a compatriot - travel details are a typical case. To write down an account of a conversation in direct speech and then in indirect speech in the foreign tongue is an unlikely activity. Dunning recognises this and justifies it on other grounds (see page 13).

Since the teachers in the project agreed that writing in an assessable way would be beyond many of the candidates it was decided that the certificate would be obtainable in two ways: through Talking alone or with Writing/Reading. This had *'the advantage of permitting the more able to achieve the standard in more abilities while at the same time not discouraging the less able with failure'*. This pre-occupation with making the system suitable for the most able is not met in this conscious form in any other scheme, but it is found in the current GCSE distinction between higher and basic levels.

In the final version reading is tested separately. At Level 1 it consists of a letter and at Levels 2 and 3 of a letter or any other appropriate piece of prose. Candidates have to summarise the text in English.

The writing test at Level 1 is either a report and scenario or a letter replying to a given one. At Levels 2 and 3 the task can be similar or it can be a piece of imaginative writing, even a dialogue. In the latter case it is at least partly to be judged according to how it would sound when read aloud.

Along with assessment by the teacher, progress cards allow learners a degree of self assessment. The functions on the cards are the same as those that will eventually be required in the teacher assessment. As in the Lothian scheme their purpose is threefold: they provide a syllabus for the learner at any given level, a record of achievement by which learners can monitor for themselves how they are coping with individual tasks, and an assessment record for the teacher to show which tasks have been successfully completed.

The other big schemes in the early days - West Sussex, Lancashire/Cumbria, for example - did not add significantly to the ways in which assessment problems were approached. In most cases there was separate skill testing, the oral test was carried out by face to face communication with the teacher using a combination of role plays (some rigid, some more open), personal questions and general conversation on topics, listening and reading were separately assessed using materials very similar to what had already appeared in previous tests.

The revised OMLAC scheme provides a further illustration of the use of progress cards and of one version of continuous assessment of speaking/listening very much on the East Midland model. These changes arose after considerable experiment with other forms of oral testing. In 1981, Keith Gordon, the then coordinator of the scheme, in a document introducing the new system, wrote about the oral element:

> *'All the perennial problems of the disproportionate time involved - between four to ten minutes per pupil - for what is a small proportion of the total mark, have bedevilled us. We have tried various formats, including pictures, diagrams, identity cards, etc, but have often found that the more we tried to simplify administration, the more complex the test seemed to become to teacher and pupil. The question of moderation and consistency of marking has been difficult, unlike some other testing teams we did not adopt tape recording and external moderation. Many of our teachers reported diffidence on the part of the candidates when faced with a tape recorder and again, to moderate externally would have thrown an intolerable burden on teachers, many of whom had already given up a great deal of time in producing syllabuses and the tests themselves.'*

It should be said that in both the Lothian and York schemes recording of orals has always been used without any problems. Unlike the Lothian and East Midlands progress cards those in the Oxfordshire scheme are centrally provided (see Fig. 1).

They perform the same function as the East Midlands cards except that their completion is an essential prerequisite for presentation for formal assessment. When the learner has ticked all the items on her card she can present herself to the teacher to be assessed on the whole Task.

Figure 1

Level 1

I can:

1. ask for tickets for a bus or a train;
2. ask how much that costs;
3. understand how much that costs.

Task

I can buy tickets for use on public transport.

Task components are usually couched in general terms: 'I can ask for a variety of snacks and drinks', rather than specific ones: 'I can ask for an orange juice', thus enabling teachers to use several components with the same function and ensuring that learners acquire a wider vocabulary.

Oral task assessment is again cued by cards showing the information to be gained or given. There is an insistent principle that as far as possible no English should appear on the cue cards. They contain instead either authentic or simulated authentic materials like café price lists or conventional symbols (conventional in the sense that they are known to the pupil), following the East Midland practice. Some tasks are to be carried out by the learner with the teacher, others by two learners being assessed together. In the former case the tasks are transactional ones where it would be inauthentic to ask a learner to play the part of, for example, a shopkeeper or railway ticket clerk. The problems that can arise with learner/learner assessment are catered for. If one of the learners cannot continue she can be prompted (and the fact noted in the score awarded), the teacher can take over the learner's part (who then fails that assessment) or the assessment can be stopped and both learners reassessed later. Learners who score zero on a task may re-present themselves at a later date as often as the teacher finds convenient. Each learner must offer seven whole tasks for assessment taken from separate Communication Areas (see section I).

There is a further element in this procedure that is taken up particularly in the Durham and Buckinghamshire schemes. It has been argued on many occasions that performance of the task at any given moment does not guarantee that the learner could still perform the task at a later date. This is, of course, true of all assessment even of the most traditional sort. The Progress Card systems do ensure that learners perform the task twice, once to their own satisfaction in filling up the progress card and the second time demonstrating their completion of the whole task to the teacher. Moreover, later levels recycle and retest the same functions but with more complex exponents. The idea of requiring more than one performance from a learner becomes a conscious principle in later schemes. The Durham scheme uses progress cards precisely to encourage the possibility of multiple performance.

> *'It would seem to be a potential advantage of continuous assessment that we do not have to attach marks to an individual utterance pronounced on one occasion.'*

Similarly, the Buckinghamshire scheme takes as one of its basic principles the idea of repeated successful performance being necessary for certification.

The speaking/listening part of the Oxfordshire scheme is, then, carried out by the teacher at appropriate times. The listening and reading test is summative and centrally supplied.

Although 'creative activities' constitute an important element in the OMLAC syllabuses, it is obviously difficult to include them in an assessment system. Moreover, as the syllabus writers say,

> *'... this would run counter to the idea of learners feeling totally free to experiment with language. It is therefore suggested that teachers should encourage their classes to build up a folder of work produced as a result of engaging in this area and to display these folders within their own schools as an example of the creativity of foreign language learners'.*

Whereas the framers of most schemes would hope that there would be non-assessable work done within the ambit of their scheme this is the first mention in a syllabus of the importance of such activity and how it can be pursued without being formally assessed. We find similar suggestions in the Durham scheme.

In the Berkshire scheme the problem of continuous assessment is dealt with by a process of systematic classroom monitoring using a grid. This forms part of the assessment of the Foundation and Level 1 material and must be passed before the learner can enter for the summative aural test. The functions to be assessed in this way, along with suggestions for dealing with them, are given in the syllabus. For example:

2.10 State something is forgotten.
There will always be words which have been forgotten: 'What is it? I've forgotten'. 'I've forgotten the date.'

3.6,8,9 Express surprise, satisfaction, dissatisfaction.
The actions might be practised and monitored whenever the teacher gives test results, says 'no homework', gives a detention, produces pictures, plays records, ...

The teacher is encouraged to keep the grid in the mark book to ensure a check on progress is kept. The third element of the assessment is the periodic oral test (POT) of which there are three at Foundation Level and a further three at Level 1 covering specified topics. The POTs are produced centrally but vary in format according to the function being assessed. They consist of a variety of tasks: giving personal information in response to questions, completing a school timetable by asking for the necessary information, talking about one's family (candidates can bring their own photographs and must communicate eight pieces of information), follow directions from a street map or say what is available from a particular shop with visual or vocal prompts. Some of the tasks are carried out by pupils in pairs using prompt cards. A table of methods and materials is provided so that teachers and candidates know what to expect. The tests can be taken at any convenient time, but the problem of large scale one to one testing is acknowledged and suggestions and solutions are given.

The aural tests (at Foundation and Level 1) consist of short items grouped into two tests each lasting about fifteen minutes. They are monologues and dialogues, scripted and then recorded by native speakers, to be taken only after the oral tests have been satisfactorily completed. Classroom monitoring forms part of the assessment system only for Foundation Level and Level 1. At Level 3 there are two extra orals in the final summative assessment. One lasts three minutes and consists of a role play and a short conversation, the second one lasts five minutes and the learner must demonstrate the ability to ask questions and sustain a conversation on one topic out of the given list. At Level 3 there is also a test of reading comprehension. There are two listening and reading tests both lasting half an hour and including short recorded items and reading comprehension items consisting of authentic materials printed in their original format. These are not, however, set in a story line which would give them an overall common context.

The Cambridgeshire scheme illustrates one answer to the concern to group activities and skills. In this case they are gathered into a series of simulations. These involve collecting from written sources and from conversations information which then leads on to other activities. Candidates are also required to provide information which might involve note taking, but there is no test of writing as such.

In Level 3, from which the example below is taken, each of the six simulations would usually be assessed after half a term's work. The learner has a Task Sheet, four A4 pages of information consisting of six advertisements for cinemas and the films they are showing, a bus map showing the six routes of the Reseau Urbain of Clermont Ferrand, and a bus timetable. All are reproductions of genuine authentic materials.

1. Look at the publicity brochure to find a restaurant.
   I DECIDED TO GO TO .... IN THE RUE
2. Ring the restaurant and reserve a table for two people this evening.
   Interviewer's signature......................
3. Look at the menu. Explain to your friend that you do not like one of the items on the menu.
   Interviewer's signature......................

Extract from one of the Cambridgeshire Simulations. In task 1 the candidate has several advertisements to look at, some for restaurants, others not. In the other tasks the teacher acts as the interlocutor. (There are eight tasks in this simulation.)

There is also an Interviewer's Sheet and an Invigilator's Sheet. The Interviewer has to play the part of all the French speakers mentioned on the pupil's Task Sheet (friend, cinema attendant, etc). The Interviewer's Sheet explains that the learner will come to be interviewed when ready and provides the information the Interviewer has to give as well as what is to be regarded as an acceptable or unacceptable utterance by the learner. A satisfactory performance is acknowledged by the Interviewer signing the learner's Task Sheet. The Invigilator's Sheet tells the Invigilator that questions from the learner about the English rubrics may be answered and general explanations about what the learner has to do be given, but the Invigilator must not make any comment on the French materials. This sheet is also a mark sheet providing all the correct responses expected from the learner. There is a pupil's checklist for each simulation which enables the learner to monitor his/her own progress during the learning which precedes the assessment. It contains all the functions or activities required in the simulation (for example 'enquire about available entertainments', 'phone to check starting times') and the instruction is given:

> *'when you are sure that you can do the task shown, put a tick in the pupil column. Your teacher may make spot checks on some of these items.'*

There are distinct practical implications for the organisation of the testing. Two teachers are involved, one invigilator and one interviewer. The invigilator sits with a class and deals with difficulties while the candidates prepare themselves, the interviewer sits in an adjoining room where the interviews take place. Instructions in a later version of the syllabus add:

> *'If a large room is being used, it may be possible for the interviewer to be in a corner of the preparation room provided that candidates waiting to do an interview cannot hear what candidates doing their interview are saying. (Experience has shown that candidates speak so softly that this is not a problem.)'*

The Durham scheme also groups activities and skills together to provide tasks which are more authentic and more interesting for the learner. At the same time it provides a clear-cut example of how a scheme can rapidly evolve from an initial compromise position to one more in accord with its fundamental principles as the teachers become more confident that their scheme will in fact work.

There are two levels, *Niveau Fondamental* and *Niveau Moyen*. The first is assumed to take something over a year, the second to go on well into the third year. Thereafter the goal would be the new GCSE or possibly a Durham Mode 3 version. The basic principles are that teaching/learning is the important thing and that assessment should arise naturally out of it, be in some way part of it and should certainly not interfere with it. Progress cards (*Cartes-Echelons*) are then to be the kernel of the *Niveau Fondamental*. They are not to be regarded as tests but as activities that are naturally part of the teaching. In the first version of the scheme there were summative centrally provided tests in listening and reading, but in the new version in operation since 1987 these have been discontinued and certification is based on the activities described in the progress cards alone. If teachers find the whole level represents too distant an objective they can issue a *Certificat d'Etape* based on any group of progress cards. The cards are centrally organised, each one dealing with a particular topic and are designed to recycle language previously learnt so as to avoid 'once for all' testing. They reflect the general philosophy of the scheme by having, as the syllabus document states, *'a strong emphasis on oral/aural skills'*, and by underlining *'the importance of transferring work from the presentation and practice stages to the productive use of language'* and stressing *'the view that linguistic aims cannot be divorced from some understanding of the cultural context'*. They consist of receptive and productive items. It is recognised that the breaking down of activities into small items for testing can be artificial and therefore each card contains a section *'le Coffre d'Activités'* which lists multi-skill activities. The cards as a whole imply pairwork, groupwork and full class activities. For example, the shopping card includes tasks like:

> Read a simple shopping list
>
> in a shop in France I would ask:
> - for things I wanted;
> - for the amount I needed;
> - for the price of the goods;
> - how much I must pay altogether;
>
> in a shop I would understand what the shopkeeper said to me and I would be able to reply.

Among the activities in the *Coffre d'Activites* is:

> we have made up a play/video about shopping.

This represents a considerable advance on earlier tests and indeed on earlier progress cards. It does, however, illustrate once again the problem of the role of the mother tongue. It would be difficult to see how some of these activities could be expressed either in symbols (like those used in the Oxford or East Midlands cue cards) or in the foreign language.

In the *Niveau Moyen* the Progress Cards are replaced by Assessment Tasks. In the paper 'Niveau Moyen: Principles of Assessment', the commitment to continuous assessment is repeated and an explanation given:

> *'It reinforces the principle that the main emphasis should be on* **teaching**. *The purpose of the progress cards in* Niveau Fondamental *and the assessment tasks in* Niveau Moyen *is to reach* **assessment through teaching** *rather than instead of or in addition to teaching. The concept of 'bolt on tests' at the end of the course or at the end of the year is alien to the overall principles of the scheme.'*

The assessment tasks are related to themes. There are three themes - *Une Visite Scolaire, Echange Scolaire, En Vacances* - and each is to be assessed by the completion of two tasks. These consist of varied activities implying pair, group or whole class work as those on the progress cards do. For example, Task 2 in the theme *Une Visite Scolaire* involves six 'activités'. The candidate is addressed as 'you' throughout the task and during each activity acts as him/herself.

1. A tape is to be listened to representing the 'Directeur' welcoming the visitor and giving details about the school. These are to be recorded on a grid.

2. (i) The day is to be spent with one of the pupils. A list of ten pieces of information to be found out about the young person is given. The questions the learner is going to ask to find these out are to be recorded on the learner's personal cassette.

   (ii) A tape of the pupil's replies is supplied and a 'fiche' about him/her has to be filled in.

3. A French pupil's school report is supplied and questions are to be answered about it.

4. (i) At lunch the learner studies the menu and hears on tape his French friend talking with another about what is on offer. The grid has to be filled in using given pictures of various dishes.

   (ii) A fairly open-ended role play between the learner and a dinner lady is provided. This is to be practised in pairs and eventually may be recorded for assessment.

5. The next day a note is received from the French friend. Questions on it are to be answered.

6. Finally a thank you letter is to be written.

The writing activity is optional as far as the assessment of the whole task is concerned. As can be seen, each task is a mixture of listening, reading, speaking and writing mostly in well integrated activities. As in *Niveau Fondamental* involvement of the learner in the organisation of the assessment is part of the system. In this case a Pupil Dossier is used. This can be a file, folder or even an empty cereal packet with a distinctive cover (sample provided in the *Niveau Moyen* booklet). Into the folder go the learner's personal cassette, a collection of items of personal interest related to France (labels, stamps, letters, etc), a diary or 'log book' in French for three separate weeks during the year and the Pupil's Record Sheet on which she records not only her progress through the tasks but also her own comments on them - *J'ai aimé ..., je n'ai pas aimé ..., ... c'était facile, ... c'était ennuyeux, etc.'* In this way learners are not only encouraged to reflect upon their own learning but also to realise that the material served up to them is not unchangeable. By inviting their opinions which they know will be taken account of in revision of the materials, learners are made aware that they can have an effect on those materials for the benefit of subsequent learners. In a way this can be seen as a further step in the involvement of learners heralded several years ago by John Clark of Lothian who, before starting work on a syllabus at all, conducted a survey among pupils to find out what they wanted a foreign language course to contain.

The Buckinghamshire scheme can be seen to be evolving in the same direction. In its original form it used semi-guided role plays:

> At your pen friend's home you don't feel very well. Tell your host you feel ill, you are hot and you'd like something to drink. Answer his/her questions. (Level 1)

> You have just checked in at a youth hostel. Your teacher will play the part of the warden. Find out about washing facilities and where breakfast is served. You also need to hire a sleeping bag. (Level 3)

Some require the candidate to gather information from the examiner. The listening and reading tests are separate. The listening involves gathering information of various sorts from a series of recorded items, some monologues and some dialogues. In the reading test, questions are set on a variety of authentic items (menus, advertisements, short tourist brochure items) all photocopied so that they appear in their original format. The marks are entered on a grid. This examination is a fairly typical modernisation of the early assessment formats.

Revisions of all these syllabuses are, however, now being made and new test types piloted. The materials provided are to be suitable both for teaching and assessment; they mix topic and skill and repeat language tasks so that the teaching and assessment becomes cyclical. A recurring theme throughout the preliminary document is that *'no pupil should be judged on their one and only performance of a particular task or task type'*; *'competence is judged by the teacher as* **repeated successful performance over the range of objectives'**.

Tasks as defined in the syllabus are to be replicable - that is they are such that teachers can easily devise similar tasks or even replace the tasks given to better suit their own teaching sequence and/or materials - and flexible - that is they can be done in any order and in a variety of ways. For example, they can be joined together in various ways so that teachers can set up many small tasks, a few big tasks or several small tasks and then repeat them joined together as bigger tasks (the method preferred by the Working Party). Similarly they can be used for learning only, assessment only or a mixture of both (again the approach preferred by the Working Party). Organisation of the assessment is left to the teacher, but suggestions are made on how the tasks can be tackled by pupils either individually, in pairs or in groups of three to five . If group assessment is used the teacher can be part of the group or not and can carry out the assessment herself or rely on pupils to judge each other's performance. Again, the Working Party favours mixing all these approaches. The progress card will therefore contain several ticks by each box possibly given by several people - class teacher, fellow pupil or any other teacher. Whatever happens, repeated successful performances are required and the formal signature of the teacher must acknowledge this. The Progress Card itself starts *'I can'* and then lists a series of skills (fourteen in the example illustrated in the draft syllabus) such as:

> *...talk about my interests, say what I like and dislike and ask others, ask about opening and closing times, handle money, deal with people politely.*

One box even says *'deal with waiters* !

The point is that though the skills are listed separately in this way, they are assessed as parts of a bigger task.

Task 1 is a typical task that can be accomplished with pupil and teacher or with two pupils or with three pupils. The materials needed are a set of pictures of four or five objects (camera, passport, money, etc), two street maps, unmarked, and a notepad. The draft document describes the task thus:

> Partner A: *You have been in Calais on a day trip with your parents. You suddenly realise you have lost something (choose one of the cards in the pack).*
>
> > **Find your way to the police station by asking the way and marking it on your map (use blank map in pack).*
> > **When you get to the police station, say what you've lost and answer any other questions you are asked.*
>
> Partner B: *Choose one building on the map to be the police station (use blank map in pack).*
>
> > **Tell anyone who asks the way to the police station.*
>
> Partner B or Partner C: *Pretend you are a policeman at the police station in Calais.*
>
> > **Find out what the person wants and write down in English what he/she said (use police note pad in pack).*

There follows an indication of the functions required from each of the participants:

> Partner A:
> **Asking the way and mark on map to show understanding.*
> **Reporting a loss.*
>
> PartnerB:
> **Giving directions.*
>
> (Or C* **Finding out what someone wants and noting down details.*)

It is pointed out that all this can also be combined with Task 2 which is a similar lost property situation but includes giving personal details. There is also a sample dialogue to show teachers the level of achievement expected.

It is in an example like this that we see most clearly how graded objectives schemes have evolved by attempting to deal not only with language teaching, but also with methodological and ideological matters. There has been a move towards more flexible forms of assessment which has also meant recognising the autonomy of the teacher as teacher and of the learner as learner. The teacher is freer in the Buckinghamshire scheme than in most to combine and recombine separate elements into different wholes for teaching and assessing and both those intentions are deliberately intertwined. The learner is made free to choose when to be assessed and, to a certain extent, by whom and in what form. Intrinsic to the whole scheme is the principle of repeated successful performance.

Moreover, possibly for the first time, the wider educational - one might say moral - implications of a system like this are set down as quite conscious goals which learners are encouraged to pursue: not only 'coping with problems', 'organising the tasks', 'using pair strategies', but also 'being polite', 'working co-operatively' and 'presenting materials neatly'. In this way the planners of the scheme show again that they see pupils not only as language learners but as whole individuals, and language learning as having an effect on their development as individuals.

ORGANISATION AND MATERIALS

The organisation of groups has always varied and, again, the early ones illustrate the patterns that were adopted. In Oxfordshire, a group of teachers aided by an enthusiastic local authority adviser, Keith Gordon, who himself was not a linguist, set up an organising committee which quickly acquired a network of advisers and helpers. The LEA also very soon seconded a teacher to work full-time on the scheme. In York, the initial move came from Michael Buckby at the University Language Teaching Centre, whose suggestions found a rapid and enthusiastic response from the group of teachers who remained, for some years, the kernel of that scheme. In the Lancashire/Cumbria scheme David Peacock, then Director of the Institute for European Education, joined forces with the language advisers of Lancashire and Cumbria LEAs to set up a scheme based at the institute. It very soon became the largest in the country. Instead of absorbing its energies in devising and setting new tests every year it broke new ground by concentrating on creating tests at several levels in several languages as soon as possible and making these available on demand. It also set up a network of teacher working parties concerned with materials and methodology.

One of the most important aspects of the situation was and remains that almost all the work is done by practising teachers. The initial ideas may have come from elsewhere, but the practical realisations in terms of syllabus and tests have, more often than not, been produced by working teachers who are themselves experiencing the realities of the classroom every day. No-one can say that the work produced is not rooted in practical experience. Almost always this has meant, at least at the outset, considerable work by teachers in their own time. For example, the first West Sussex syllabus which covers 60 A4 pages was written by a group of teachers meeting regularly in their own time throughout the academic year 1980/81. Many local authorities have reacted favourably and now allow meetings in school time, some have seconded one or more teachers full or part time for considerable periods, one or two have provided substantial cash grants to organising bodies. The support of local authority language advisers or similar figures in teachers' centres, university, polytechnic or college of education departments, etc has usually been of crucial importance.

Along with syllabuses and tests many groups produced documents for teachers outlining the new approach to teaching the syllabuses implied and giving some guidance on methodology. John Clarke in Lothian provided at regular intervals papers of information and guidance on all aspects of the Lothian scheme. Most of them are contributions to ideas on language learning and teaching that have relevance far outside Lothian. The most important of these were rewritten to form the first volume of the Syllabus Guidelines series published by *CILT* (Clark and Hamilton 1984). Eric Garner's introductory papers to the West Sussex scheme are similarly well worth reading by anyone concerned with language teaching. They have not been published but can be consulted in the *CILT* Library.

In later schemes this tradition has continued. Durham, for example, supplies a Teacher's Pack with each syllabus that contains, along with materials necessary for recording assessment, 'an overall outline for the teaching programme'. They also regularly publish booklets containing working papers and records of meetings of the User and Steering Groups, comments from teachers and details of materials available so that all can see what the decisions are, how they are arrived at and how they are expected to be implemented.

Many groups found that commercially produced teaching materials were inappropriate for their purpose and started to produce their own. In the case of the Midlands group, for example, the essential role played by cue cards using symbols meant that the teachers had to produce them themselves. Two teachers, Do Coyle and Bernadette McGee, who were in the scheme from the beginning, describe what this meant.

> *'The methodology we have adopted has meant that we have had to make many of our own materials. We do use textbooks if and when they suit our purposes, but most of the time we use worksheets, overhead transparencies, reading cards and cue cards which we have made ourselves. ... Resources were our immediate concern: for example, overhead projectors had to be accessible to all members of the department and the reappraisal of departmental expenditure was necessary. Rather than spend money on published courses we spent most of our allowance on overhead projectors, reprographic materials, stationery and storage equipment.'* (Dunning 1983)

In some cases, teaching materials were produced centrally like the four thirty-page booklets *Bonne Route* in Clwyd. In others these led to commercial publications like *Entente Cordiale* and *Auf ins Rheinland* (Hodder & Stoughton 1979, 1980) made from materials produced in the Oxford scheme. In West Sussex, Eric Garner obtained a grant from the EEC to enable a teacher to be seconded to collect background 'civilisation' material.

The BBC was quick to see the need and produced materials on both radio and television which dealt specifically with topics common to many graded objectives schemes. Since that time commercial publishers have brought out a great variety of suitable materials and the demands of the new GCSE now ensure that these will continue to appear.

Teachers continue, however, to feel the need for materials more closely related to their own schemes. These, nowadays, usually appear along with teachers' notes which underline the principles on which the scheme is based. In the Durham scheme, a series of booklets and teaching materials supplied by teachers have been produced. Those put together by Melanie Hooper, project coordinator for the Berkshire scheme, are perhaps the most sophisticated example so far of closely targetted material. Significantly they are called 'Starter Resource Packs' because they are intended to give teachers ideas as well as materials and so encourage them to devise others for themselves. They are allied closely to the syllabus in content, philosophy and methodology. The preamble to the Communications Starter Pack: Oral Materials French Level 1 says: 'All the materials in this resource pack have been devised by a group of Berkshire teachers wishing to promote communicative competence in their pupils. They are grouped according to the syllabus areas of the Berkshire graded objectives in modern languages scheme and are specifically designed to give practice in and prepare for the types of communicative activity which feature in the Periodic Oral Tests at Level 1. In all the activities contained in this pack, real communication between pupils can be achieved by those language items designated for productive use in the Level 1 syllabus. The games activities in the pack have been carefully piloted in a cross-section of Berkshire schools with a wide sample of pupils. Amendments and improvements have been made in the light of the practical experience and comments of the teachers concerned. Only those activities considered to fit the following criteria have been included:

1. genuinely communicative and purposeful;
2. able to stimulate a large amount of practical and appropriate language;
3. enjoyed and appreciated by the pupils.

This resource pack is therefore offered to those involved in the Berkshire GOML scheme. All the activities are primarily pupil-centred and pupil-dominated. The aim is to promote in pupils the ability and the willingness to interact with each other and to offer them the challenge of talking together in order to complete a task, solve a problem or find out some information for a specific purpose. This type of activity may mean that 25 or more pupils may be talking together at the same time, some may be moving round the classroom... The result will not be a silent teacher-dominated lesson ... but hopefully one where real language is being used and real communication taking place.'

The instructions for each activity and its scope are exhaustively described.

Syllabus area 1 NAME, NATIONALITY, ORIGIN, AGE, BIRTHDATE

ACTIVITY 1.1 INTERVIEWING SOMEONE

Potential Functions:

Seeking and giving information
Seeking and giving confirmation

Denying
Reacting
Describing

Materials included in this pack:

15 Identity Cards
1 Prompt Card

Action to be taken by teacher:

Duplicate each Identity Card once, each Prompt Card fifteen times for a class of thirty

Procedure:
Pupils work in pairs and must not see each other's card. Pupil A uses Prompt Card to interview Pupil B who assumes the identity of his/her Identity Card. Roles can then be swapped, cards exchanged with another pair of pupils.

Variation:
Pupil A could record in writing the information acquired from Pupil B. On completion of the activity, this could be checked against the information shown on the Identity Card.

Approximate duration of the activity:
10-15 minutes allows most pairs to complete several interviews

The pack contains 28 activities.

The activities of the National Coordinating Committee for Graded Objectives in Modern Language Learning have also contributed to the creation of teaching and testing materials and the dissemination of ideas. The committee was set up in 1979 after a seminar organised by *CILT* to review the progress of graded objectives schemes. It has initiated research (Harrison 1982, Utley 1983) and organises an annual weekend conference which, in recent years, has been most generously subsidised by the Goethe Institut. The weekend is usually devoted to a particular theme, such as communicative writing tasks, oral assessment, developing reading skills. It is intended that participants produce relevant materials during the two days . The results are extensively reported in the GOML newsletter, which also publishes reports on the activities of graded objectives groups throughout the country. Through the initiative of Michael Buckby the French Government has, for several years now, provided grants which enable about fifteen teachers to spend a fortnight at the Centre International des Etudes Pédagogiques in Sèvres, where they collect authentic materials in the form of audio and video recordings, brochures, newspapers, articles, etc. The arrangements are made by the GOML committee through the good offices of *CILT*. In all these ways, practising teachers provide for themselves materials which they feel are relevant and interesting to their own pupils.

DIVERSIFICATION

GRADED OBJECTIVES IN MODERN LANGUAGES (GOML) SURVEY 1986

The following chart is by no means complete or comprehensive. It is offered more as a means of showing the spread of GOML initiatives throughout the country. Many groups were unable to make precise returns for 1986 because of the way their scheme works, i.e. it is based on the calendar year or tests can be taken at any time at three weeks' notice. Where precise new figures were unavailable, 1985 returns were carried forward or an estimate given (E).

F = French
G = German
S = Spanish
It = Italian
R = Russian
C = Chinese

D1 = Dutch 1
G = Greek
Jp = Japanese
P(X) = Punjabi
UF = Urdu Foundation
W = Welsh

The number indicates the level of graded objectives which has been reached by a group.

X indicates that tests were taken but no figures are available;
+ = including adult education;
$ = number of schools;
** = 1985 figures;*
° = includes Foundation Level figures.

NUMBERS PARTICIPATING IN GOML SCHEMES NATIONALLY - based on questionnaire returns, Autumn 1986

	F1	*F2*	*F3*	*F4*	*F5*	*G1*	*G2*	*G3*	*G4*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*It1*	*It2*	*It3*	*R1*	*R2*	*Total*
Barnet	1896	1517				629	295			19	38							4394
Bedf/shire*	X	X	1434			940				190								2374
Belfast 1*	3260	2278	567							30								6135
Belfast 2* (ASC)	302	79	73															454
Berkshire	°2295	650				°955	225									C-30		4125
Birm/ham*	1429	380	156			451	224			123						UF-180		2763
Bradford	°3160	1500	260			320	110			105								5455
Bromley	1600	159	25			623	30											2437
Buckingham shire	2050	1240	820	310	53	825	560	270	165	G5-38						D1(X)		6293
Bury	950	586	34			222	378	40		469	220	60				X	X	2959
Cambridge-shire	4200E	800E	1300			300E		700		60E						P(X)		7360
Cleveland	2705	1409	618	350		1514	732	294	125									7747
Clwyd	1400	1400	1600					300						*W1-2000		W2-1000		7700
Croydon	1262	243				612	93			58								2268

NUMBERS PARTICIPATING IN GOML SCHEMES NATIONALLY (ctd.)

	F1	*F2*	*F3*	*F4*	*F5*	*G1*	*G2*	*G3*	*G4*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*It1*	*It2*	*It3*	*R1*	*R2*	*Total*
Cum/Lanc +	46401	29673	8205			19403	9596	2417		6354	1915	481	949	320	G-67	240	29	125983
Doncaster	1810	1225	530			255	153			30	X					X	X	4003
Durham	°2000																	2000
E. Midlands	4945	4335	2880	703														12863
Essex*	8950	8600	3750	1000		3850	3750	500	400	650	400		50				150	32050
Guernsey*	100	150	8															258
Havering*	853	478				470	90			X			X					1891
Hereford & Worcs.	2569	2920	699	5		651	446	210		152	22		72					7746
Hertf/shire	7321	5765				3873	1856			289	136							19240
Humberside		4939					1979			470			25	55		310		7778
ILEA*$	94	43	41							23	8							(209)
Kent	4997	3651	1065			1346	262	450		354	85		65					12275
Kirklees	2918	1930	342	7		901	783	367	61				20					7329
Leeds	2762	1494	457	94		938	189	39										5963
Leicester*						50												50

NUMBERS PARTICIPATING IN GOML SCHEMES NATIONALLY (ctd.)

	F1	*F2*	*F3*	*F4*	*F5*	*G1*	*G2*	*G3*	*G4*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*It1*	*It2*	*It3*	*R1*	*R2*	*Total*
Liverpool*	1000	100				27	45			280			20					1472
London * (AMR School)	210	210	45															465
Lothian	222	162	24			64	117	21				S4-3						610
Norfolk*	2156	719	127			220	97	29			11					26		3348
Northum/l*	500									20								520
Northants	2714	1538	449			1378	692			130			21	23	19			6964
Northdown	805	665																1470
Oldham*	2596	808	159			654	219	1		216								4653
Oxfordshire	2510	966	54			772	141			122						16		4581
Rotherham	826	593	41			234	50			216	45							2005
Sandwell	1103	471				937	385	89		136			7			2		3130
Sefton (Merseyside)	1400	900	400			36				140	110							2986
Shropshire*	2400	1350	450	600		1100	700	150										6750
Southampt.*	60	60	40			30	35	40										265
South West	6232	5175	1433	80		2506	707	151		529	199		143	71				17226

NUMBERS PARTICIPATING IN GOML SCHEMES NATIONALLY (ctd.)

	F1	*F2*	*F3*	*F4*	*F5*	*G1*	*G2*	*G3*	*G4*	*S1*	*S2*	*S3*	*It1*	*It2*	*It3*	*R1*	*R2*	*Total*
Staffs	2179	1612	522			414	285	53		172	87							5264
Stockport	1444	938				874	90			204	100		15			65		3730
Suffolk	3132	2269	292	177		1169	373	24	59	46	87		35		JP1-4	JP2-8		7670
Surrey	6000	3000				1000	1000			250			200					11450
Wakefield*	500	500	100															1100
Wales (NLU Cardiff)*	1922	738	57			942	150			39	5							3853
Walsall*	2259	1313	39			134	86			145								3976
Waltham Forest	1361	605	711			387	190	24										3278
West Sussex	5500	4300	1650	1126	339	1700	750	100	20	250	100							15835
Yorkshire, N*	4569	4077	1729			1701	1833	520		101	152							14702
Yorkshire, W TASC/ATSP										625	250							875
TOTAL	**207237**	**132185**	**41901**	**41901**	**392**	**71630**	**34835**	**9872**	**830**	**17690**	**5615**	**170**	**2623**	**590**	**19**	**734**	**254**	**430068**

II. RESEARCH

Throughout the development of the GOML movement most of the research effort of those who have become interested in graded objectives has, not surprisingly, been concerned with making the ideas behind the movement operational - the development of syllabuses and tests, the extension of syllabuses to further levels and languages, and the development of teaching materials and an appropriate methodology.

Most of this work has been carried out at a local level to meet the needs of interested schools in one or more LEAs. Co-ordination of these efforts by providing a source of information about GOML schemes and by providing a framework for the exchange of information has been undertaken by *CILT*. Parallel with this, however, there have also been several research projects which have sought to obtain an overview of developments.

The most general of these, carried out as part of the Schools Council's programme for improving the examination system, was in fact intended to be a study of the whole principle of graded tests (Harrison 1982), and looks at graded tests in mathematics as well as in modern languages. The main focus of the study, which was published in 1982, is however on GOML. Andrew Harrison finds that GOML is successful because of the conviction and effort of teachers and concludes that *'...their enthusiasm and commitment has resulted in successful learning for pupils and improved morale for other teachers as well as themselves'.*

A second Schools Council project (Utley, Mitchell & Phillips, 1983), the result of a request from the Co-ordinating Committee for GOML, looked at the much narrower, but in communicative terms crucial, field of oral/aural graded tests in modern languages. The aim was to survey current work on assessment, the methods used, the problems encountered, and the types of solution proposed. The results of this survey were published in 1983. In addition to a questionnaire designed to elicit the information, reports were commissioned, copies of which are to be found in the GOML 'green files' at *CILT*.

Supplementing these national projects have been local studies tracing the development of GOML in the LEA. In a recently completed study (1), for example, Alma Hellaoui looks at the development of graded objectives and tests in Cleveland over the last ten years, at the same time placing the innovation in a theoretical context. Her research, begun in 1983, involved an analysis of the documents produced in the education authority and questionnaires, interviews and discussions with teachers. Alma Hellaoui emphasises the communicative style of teaching and sees this as having a 'knock on' effect in many subject areas.

Anthony Murphy's thesis for MSc (2), was based on research carried out in Autumn 1983 on the changes which had occurred in Kent as a result of the introduction of graded objectives. An analysis of questionnaires revealed on the positive side that the graded schemes had considerably increased pupils' motivation, especially among the less able, for learning languages and that more pupils were opting to study a foreign language at 14+. At the same time he found that teachers in general felt that the Kent schemes would need revision if they were to be a basis for pupils to study foreign languages beyond the level of minimum competence.

Perhaps the most important area of research into GOML, however, is that of evaluation. Several studies have shown that the use of a GOML approach arouses enthusiastic responses from the teachers involved (3). Given that these teachers are largely self-selecting this is hardly surprising. Any movement, if it is to be successful, however, must be able to convince not just the committed, but a decisive number of potentially sceptical outsiders that what it has to offer really does produce superior results. The teacher quoted by Andrew Harrison (Harrison, 1982, p 71), who said: *'The gap between the pretentious rhetoric of theorists leading yet another crusade and the stern reality of the classroom is notoriously wide'*, may have been speaking from ignorance rather than experience of GOML, but it is an attitude to change which is commonly met and needs to be overcome.

One of the problems with any kind of evaluative exercise is the control of variables. This is particularly true when attempting to evaluate the effectiveness of one teaching method compared with another. How, for example, do you take account of variations in enthusiasm and ability to teach which may be entirely unrelated to method? For this reason evaluative studies carried out so far have tended to fall into two groups, some investigators feeling that whatever the merits of a comparative study the results will be invalidated by a failure to control these variables.

One research project which deliberately avoided making comparisons was the evaluation of the East Midlands Graded Assessment Feasibility Study by Elaine Freedman (Freedman, 1982), carried out in the school year 1979-80. The use of a control group was rejected on the grounds that any comparison would be invalid, firstly because the schools participating in the study were voluntary and, therefore, likely to be in some indefinable way different, and secondly because it would be impossible to control the variables without the full co-operation of the schools in the control group, which was unlikely to be forthcoming. Questionnaires were administered to teachers and pupils during the course of the first year of an East Midlands graded assessment course to obtain information about their attitudes to the learning and teaching of French. Every effort was made to make this seem a routine matter. The results were positive in every case: among pupils 836 found the course interesting or very interesting against 98 who found it boring or very boring; 758 pupils found the teaching enjoyable or very enjoyable, whilst only 78 found it not very enjoyable or not at all enjoyable. Amongst teachers the vast majority found the teaching very enjoyable, even though it was time-consuming, and in over half the classes teachers felt that progress was above the norm (in other classes it was about normal). The classes surveyed came from different types of school in various parts of the East Midlands and were considered to contain pupils of mixed or lower than average ability. Two interesting findings were that ability did not seem to significantly affect the pupils' answers and that a greater proportion of those using a published course enjoyed their course more than those who were not (75.7% against 64.7%).

The East Midlands Graded Assessment Feasibility Study also gave rise to further research, this time looking specifically at the ways in which the use of the scheme might have led to changes in classroom practice and assessment. In particular, it was felt that a process of standardisation was both likely and desirable. The research (Lees, 1983a), carried out by Nicola Lees whilst working for the East Midlands study, involved both systematic classroom observation of a representative sample of teachers from 31 schools in Leicestershire between September 1981 and June 1982 and the organisation and monitoring of standardisation procedures for the assessment of Level 1 French. Eight teachers were observed each week, the aim being to create an air of normality. The hypotheses tested were that: 1) French would be used by the teacher as a means of communication; 2) classwork would be in groups, pairs, or individually; 3) pupils would practise seeking as well as giving information; 4) pupils would be regularly involved in communicative activities; 5) materials used would be varied and individual to schools. It was in fact found that the amount of time devoted to each activity varied, as did the use of French. As far as assessment is concerned, views of what was acceptable and appropriate varied widely initially, but in the course of the year much greater agreement was reached, particularly with regard to oral work.

A major research project which, undeterred by the problem of controlling variables, did make a comparison between pupils taught by the GOML approach and a control group was another Schools Council sponsored project, this time carried out by the Language Centre at the University of York, with assistance from the University of Leeds and the Yorkshire Regional CSE Board (Buckby et al, 1981a). One feature of this project is in fact specifically criticised by Freedman (1982, p 35-6) as invalidating the research by introducing a significant variable. This is the fact that after the first questionnaires were administered to pupils, the experimental pupils were each given a document describing the aims of the graded test system. This criticism does not hold, however, if it is considered that keeping pupils informed is an integral feature of a GOML approach.

The aim of the York and Leeds project was to monitor schemes being developed in North Yorkshire and Leeds to find out whether attitudes to learning French, especially among pupils, changed in the course of a school year, 1979-80. For the schools in York it was the third year of the course, but the experimental pupils had not been previously tested, whilst for the Leeds schools it was the first year. The control groups were drawn from the same or similar schools. Questionnaires designed to measure attitudes were sent to pupils, teachers and parents at the beginning of the school year and again at the end. At the beginning of the second term all the pupils were given a foreign language aptitude test to check that the groups did indeed provide a representative sample of comprehensive school pupils and that the experimental and control groups were comparable in terms of aptitude. Another advantage of this test was that it made it possible to check whether graded objectives might affect pupils in one aptitude range more than in others. From a starting point where the attitudes of control and experimental pupils were roughly similar it was found by the end of the year that the experimental pupils showed quite significantly more positive attitudes towards learning French than the control pupils. Aptitude did not seem to effect this positive attitude, even among experimental pupils who failed a graded test. 62% of experimental pupils chose to continue with French after options against 45% in the control group. The attitudes of parents were found to be broadly similar to those of their children, which it is suggested is probably due to the fact that the experimental parents were kept better informed and that they were influenced by the attitudes of the pupils themselves. Throughout the year the attitude of the teachers was extremely positive towards the GOML approach and a very large majority believed that pupils of all abilities would benefit.

The real answer to the question of variables is probably that, whilst one piece of research may be inconclusive because of them, the accumulation of research from different parts of the country all producing the same result is significant. It is in this light that two further comparative studies should be seen.

A small, but nevertheless interesting study was that made by Yasmin Khan, a summary of which appeared in GOML Newsletter No. 9 in September 1984 (4). She looked at the teaching of German in two schools in the same authority with a similar catchment area and a similar ethos, one using graded objectives, and one not. She observed one class in each school for ten weeks until they took a test. During the oral test she found notable differences in the confidence of pupils: in the school where graded objectives were used eighteen pupils answered confidently, compared with ten in the other school. She had previously noticed how questions and answers came quickly to and from the whole class. In the second school pupils were asked individually and given time to answer. Significantly more German was spoken in the first school, teachers were enthusiastic and test results were significantly better.

Apart from the Schools Council research, most of the research into GOML carried out to date has been done by individuals in pursuit of qualifications ranging from PhD to BEd. In Ulster, however, large-scale research is currently (January 1987) being pursued by a team at the Queen's University of Belfast, under the leadership of Alex McEwen and John Salters, into attitudes towards learning French (5). This has involved administering questionnaires at the beginning of the school year 1985-6 to approximately 1800 pupils embarking on a GOML course for the first time in their second or third year, and to a similar number of pupils, matched for sex, type and size of school, geographical location and language aptitude, continuing to learn French in their normal way. It was hypothesised that at the outset there would be no significant difference in attitude between the two groups and this proved to be the case. At the end of the year, questionnaires were again administered and these are currently being processed. A number of teachers and pupils were also interviewed. Preliminary analysis of these has shown positive reactions to their experience of GOML from most pupils and unanimous enthusiasm from teachers about the effect of GOML on pupils' attitudes.

Mention has already been made of the problem of how to take account of variations in enthusiasm and ability to teach when evaluating teaching methods, and it has been suggested that such variables lose significance if there is an accumulation of evidence of the positive effects of GOML. Bob Wass's evaluation of graded proficiency tests in Cumbria (6) is important because, unlike most other studies, it focuses on the attitudes of teachers, and in this way throws up much useful information about the relationship between teachers' attitudes and classroom practice. Equally important from the point of view of the future development of GOML, Wass's work shows how in one authority organisational requirements have resulted in a lack of flexibility as to when tests have been taken. The limitations of GOML when it is not extended to all ability ranges and to the public examination system also become apparent.

The evaluation, carried out in 1982-83, is based mainly on questionnaires, but also on interviews with representative teachers. It starts with the advantage that, with the backing of the LEA, it was possible to send questionnaires to 49 out of 51 secondary schools in Cumbria, providing the widest possible range of experience (or non-experince) of GOML and a very wide range of schools: secondary modern, grammar, comprehensive, small, large, rural, urban, and using setting, bands or mixed ability classes. The schools were divided up according to when they first entered pupils for graded tests:

Group 1	1978-89	7 schools
Group 2	1979-80	8 schools
Group 3	1980-81	17 schools
Group 4	1981-82	10 schools
Group 5	1982-83 or none	7 schools

Separate questionnaires were sent to headteachers, heads of modern languages and assistant teachers, and responses were received from 48 out of 49 headteachers, 47 out of 49 heads of department, and 118 out of 154 (77%) assistant teachers.

It is apparent from Bob Wass's research that the longer the involvement with graded tests and the more senior the position of the member of staff, the more likely they are to have a positive attitude towards the tests and (in the case of the heads of department) to have changed their classroom method to a more communicative approach. In an analysis of changes in practice based on 32 activities Bob Wass found, for example, that the incidence of change of 25% + in activities was 26 among heads of department of Group 1, but only 11 among assistants in Group 4. Comparing teachers in Group 5, where schools had had no, or virtually no, experience of GOML, with the average produced even sharper contrasts. Among heads of department, for example, 60% in Group 5 used translation of a written passage from English into French frequently or fairly frequently against a mean of 17%. On the other hand 33% in Group 5 used 'making up a conversation/playlet with friend(s)' against a mean of 81%.

It should be emphasised at this point that the system in Cumbria is one of graded tests, and not graded objectives as such. This research shows that, whilst for many teachers the one implies the other and that to teach to graded tests requires a different method of teaching, there are a number of teachers who continue to teach by the old methods. Bob Wass mentions the perceptive comments of the teacher:

> *'If the teacher was not dedicated, graded tests brought problems of discipline which arose from inadequate lesson planning. The need to make his own syllabus gives the teacher greater freedom, but places greater obligations on him/her with regard to planning, organisation and performance.'*

Thus we are back to the findings of Andrew Harrison: a GOML approach gives the majority of teachers a greater sense of purpose and boosts morale, but hard work and dedication are essential to the successful development of GOML objectives.

Finally, mention should be made of some comparative research of a different kind being carried out by Caroline Orr (5). The aim is to compare the reforms which have occurred in Hereford and Worcester in the wake of the Council of Europe Modern Languages project (including, therefore, the development of GOML) with the situation in the Bordeaux region of France. This could be particularly interesting in throwing light on the progress of reform in a decentralised system, such as in Britain, and a centralised education system, as in France.

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(2) Murphy, A: *The development of graded objectives syllabuses and tests in modern languages in the County of Kent.* MSc thesis, University of Oxford. (1984).

(3) e.g. Harrison, 1982; Murphy, *op. cit.*

(4) Khan, Y: An evaluation of the teaching of German through the 'Graded Objectives' approach: a special study for the Degree of BEd (Hons) at Middlesex Polytechnic. Report in *GOML NEWSLETTER*, No. 9, September 1984, p 35-7.

(5) Information supplied to *CILT*.

Research

(6) Wass, R W: *Evaluation of the Cumbria/Lancashire graded proficiency tests in modern languages*. MPhil thesis, University of Lancaster. (1984).

III. REPORTS BY HM INSPECTORS

Official interest in graded objectives in modern languages has mainly taken the form of three surveys and subsequent reports undertaken by HM Inspectors in Oxfordshire (May-June 1982), Lancashire, Cumbria and Wigan (May 1984) and the Metropolitan District of Leeds (June and October 1984). All three reports discussed the way in which the implemention of graded objectives teaching and testing had affected teacher attitude, in terms of a greater awareness of clearly defined goals and differentiation of teaching approaches, and pupil motivation in terms of a more positive attitude towards language learning. With the exception of the Lancashire/Cumbria report they also discussed the syllabuses and tests themselves.

The main thrust of the Lancashire/Cumbria report is concerned with classroom practice as influenced by the use of graded objectives syllabuses in the North West.

Oxfordshire

This initiative was a pioneer in the field of graded objectives, with the Oxfordshire Modern Languages Advisory Committee being set up in 1975 and the resultant syllabuses and tests first being made available to schools in 1977.

The five HMI modern language specialists who conducted the survey visited 36 out of 55 secondary and middle schools.

Revised syllabuses for Levels 1-3 were in preparation at the time of the survey and the observations made are on the original, Mark I syllabus and tests.

Great care was said to be taken to equip pupils with the necessary language found in everyday situations encountered abroad, although it was remarked that the syllabuses of Levels 1 and 2 resembled a traditional tourist's foreign language phrase book and that they did not facilitate of themselves the re-use of components, although it was hoped that this would be encouraged. Level 3 was found to be more acceptable from this point of view but a different approach and greater complexity of language made it in some ways an unhappy sequel to Levels 1 and 2.

It was noted with regret that in a majority of schools no oral test was staged on the grounds that it was often felt to be unwieldy. A progress card, which was said to be popular with pupils, had the weakness of recording tests of single items at a time with minimal demands on recall. Items were also often learnt without being placed in context so that pupils had little or no understanding of the component parts of what they had learnt, the report continued.

However, a majority of teachers interviewed declared themselves in favour of the OMLAC syllabuses, as a way of giving short-term goals to the less able for example, thus improving both motivation and behaviour. Just as important, however, was the view that the syllabuses enabled teachers to think more clearly about their expectations of pupil performance. Irrespective of all else it was felt that many teachers would be left with a sharpened perception of the objectives appropriate to pupils of differing ages and abilities and more important still with a realisation that all children and not just the most able are capable of worthwhile linguistic achievement.

Pupils' enthusiasm was said to have increased, including that of boys, and greater concentration and interest resulted. The syllabuses and related teaching styles encouraged more active participation, and it was reported that OMLAC had resulted in pupils continuing with a modern language who would otherwise have almost certainly abandoned it.

Four specific examples of good teaching practice were cited in the report, as observed in classes where OMLAC syllabuses were being taught. These were characterised by a vigorous pace reflecting both lively teaching and an enthusiastic response from pupils coupled with the use of the target language for most if not all of the lesson. By contrast lessons which were deemed less than satisfactory involved a majority of the pupils being passive and an excessive use of English, which was compounded by the Level 1 syllabus and at least one of the commercial courses being widely used.

In the conclusion the inspectors said that they were encouraged by the introduction of new syllabuses and the flexibility and willingness to re-think which this indicated. They hoped also that tests would be administered to all pupils when they were ready for them and that the progress cards could be re-thought without losing their popularity for pupils, although concern was still expressed at the fact that only 20% of schemes of work seen were considered satisfactory.

Lancashire, Cumbria and Wigan

The stated purpose of this report was to evaluate classroom practice in those schools where graded objectives testing took place and not to evaluate the tests themselves. Thirty schools were visited by four HM Inspectors; viz Cumbria 6, Lancashire 18 and Wigan 6. In all 177 classes were visited.

The pupils' belief in their competence to communicate with speakers of a foreign language, at however modest a level in absolute terms, was viewed by several schools as having educational benefits which transcended mere willingness to continue learning a modern language.

It was possible in 22 schools to compare pupil uptake before and after the introduction of GOML programmes. In 5 schools a significant increase in numbers of pupils opting to continue in the year 1983/84 was shown and in 6 schools a very significant increase, of more than double, in comparison with the year prior to the introduction of graded objectives testing.

Teaching strategies and quality of response were found in some schools to be of high quality and unusually successful, involving more use of foreign language in the classroom than is common elsewhere. It was however felt that language structures presented were too limited in range for abler groups and a proper development of aural skills, particularly with regard to predicting information, was generally lacking for all abilities.

It was noted also that pupils, except at the simplest level, appeared to be rehearsing language rather than learning how to understand or to manipulate it in order to create a personal meaning. A similar cause for concern was that in no more than a small number of lessons did abler third year pupils appear capable of producing other tenses than the present and the immediate future. The inspectors expressed the need for progressively more sophisticated use of language and breadth of vocabulary appropriate to pupils of higher ability.

However, a variety of content and activity was observed in lessons in general. In particular, the organisational difficulties of teaching lessons lasting 70 or even 80 minutes were to some extent overcome by this variety/approach/strategy. Pair work and various types of role-play were used, including the use of information gap activities as a communicative device; although the report does highlight the need for more imaginative planning of these pupil-centred activities.

Excellent wall displays were witnessed, although they were only integrated into thirteen lessons. A variety of materials was observed in use, but the possibilities of the overhead projector and the authenticity offered by television and radio programmes were seriously under-exploited.

The graded objectives syllabuses were seen as a catalyst of innovation by many teachers and, although it can be argued that teachers who teach successfully with GOML materials would be successful teachers anyway, many felt that the GOML approach had shed a completely different light on, and given new direction to their work.

A feeling of success, motivation and interest was discerned amongst 86% of pupils which in turn was felt to be due to competent teaching, credible or reasonably relevant tasks generally pitched at an attainable level and supportive correction of errors.

Although it was not possible to demonstrate an objective causal relationship between the implementation of GOML syllabuses and successful modern languages departments, the survey showed more evidence of good, enthusiastic work by pupils, more purposeful planning by teachers and higher prestige of modern languages departments in schools than had been reported in HMI **Matters for Discussion 3** (HMSO, 1977).

All but 2 of the 18 schools where at least satisfactory work was seen had drafted detailed and helpful schemes of work. These, according to the report, demonstrated willingness to avoid the straitjacket of the methodology implicit in some published courses through a recognition that ...

> *'the test syllabuses should for the average and abler pupils be incidental to a well planned scheme of work which meets their likely needs, in terms of intellectual challenge as well as linguistic performance.'(para 7.2)*

As part of their conclusion the inspectors also identified those features of classroom practice leading to successful language teaching which they had observed. Pace and variety of content of the lesson were deemed important as were good relations with the pupils. The integration of different skills, the imaginative use of materials and equipment and excellent displays which could be used as teaching aids were also cited as examples of good practice by successful teachers. Intrinsically interesting content, with the foreign language being used as the major though not exclusive means of communication, and some outstanding exploitation of authentic materials all contributed to success in the classroom.

By the same token the over-use of English, the mechanical rehearsal of a narrow range of structures and vocabulary and an over-reliance on test items as learning objectives all exemplified, in other instances, a less than successful teaching approach. Other negative features involved a lack of intellectual challenge for the average and more able pupils and a drilling of discrete skills. A failure to develop strategies for aural comprehension was characteristic of the type of practice which effectively served to thwart the aims of graded objectives programmes.

Leeds

The Leeds survey encompassed 27 schools in the metropolitan district. The syllabuses looked at were designed to be suitable for pupils of all abilities who could ideally take a test when ready, although it was recognised that this was not always possible. It was noted that Level 3 of the Leeds scheme covered a range of tenses other than the present.

One of the main misgivings which the inspectors commented on was the fear that testing syllabuses could easily become teaching syllabuses offering a minimum content beyond which schools might think it unnecessary to go. No explicit guidance on a desirable methodology was found and the authors were also concerned by the amount of English used to test comprehension of spoken and written forms of French. Oral proficiency was also cued in English and it was possible simply to translate the cue card. Generally it was felt that there was too great an emphasis on discrete skills and the dominance of English also affected methodology.

Interesting to note was the positive influence that graded objectives were having on German, which was in practically all cases a second foreign language. The success rate was uniformly higher at all levels in secondary schools, and in at least two establishments teachers were convinced it was due to the introduction of graded objectives.

Some of the areas of need identified included the establishment of a central resources bank and a greater use of broadcast material coupled with a greater availability of visual materials, such as transparencies, pictures and flashcards as an aid to good methodology and to reduce the amount of English used in lessons.

A further need was in the area of in-service training, particularly with a schools-based focus, as there was a specific need for team work and consensus on methodology within schools.

The attitude of teachers and pupils was generally found to be positive and the influence exerted on the second foreign language was very positive. In a number of schools some very good work was seen, displaying a variety of activity and material and a preponderant use of the foreign language in the classroom.

Generally, however, it was felt that the format of the tests did not encourage good methodology and that the testing techniques ought not to be a substitute for good teaching method. Despite this it was concluded that some good work was going on and that the graded objectives syllabuses had promoted the practice of pair work and increased use of listening comprehension in some schools.

One of the main messages which emerges from these three reports is the importance of a properly conceived methodology based not solely on test items but on a broader, more comprehensive teaching syllabus. The tests themselves should act as an assessment tool and not form the basis of the language taught. Methodology, being such an important topic, is discussed separately in Chapter IV of this book.

1. A survey of the use of Graded Tests of defined objectives and their effect on the teaching and learning of modern languages in the County of Oxfordshire. (DES 1983)
2. Classroom practice in schools in NW England preparing pupils for Graded Tests of Defined Objectives in Modern Languages. (DES 1985,a)
3. A survey of work in modern languages in 27 schools in the Leeds Metropolitan District taking Graded Tests of Defined Objectives in Modern Languages. (DES 1985,b)

The Right to Reply

Representatives of each group surveyed were offered the chance to respond to the comments and findings contained in the HMI reports. The responses received have been summarised and included here as an end-piece to this chapter.

Those responsible for the schemes reported on by the HMI found their comments constructive but made the following points:

Oxford

The scheme reported on by HMI was already obsolescent. Some teacher users had been aware of its weaknesses for some time and, since 1981, had been working on the production of new syllabuses and tests. These met most of the HMI's criticisms and were to be put into operation in the year following the HMI survey.

Leeds

It was accepted that pupils were being entered inappropriately for the tests and that more teacher education was needed to rectify this. On the other hand the lack of overt methodological guidance was deliberate. The syllabuses were not drawn up as teaching syllabuses and methodology was intended to be left to the teacher. The promotion of good methodological practice was said to be a main feature of in-service training. The separate assessment of skills was vigorously defended.

Lancashire/Cumbria

The positive points regarding the beneficial effects of the scheme on the motivation of teachers and learners and the improvement of classroom practice were noted. It was pointed out that the move away from English in the oral test towards cueing by visual stimuli, welcomed by the HMI, was to be extended. It was also pointed out that teaching materials produced in the scheme - *Ouverture*, *Einfach Toll* and *Escalier* (the latter two now available commercially) - used the foreign language exclusively and were designed to encourage appropriate classroom practice.

The implications of the report had been studied in in-service training sessions and decisions to remedy defects had been taken. In particular it was intended to provide extensions to the syllabuses with an inventory of grammar to be covered. The response ends with a statement that is probably true of all the schemes insofar as their particular limitations allow:

> *'...the scheme's developers are in no way complacent but will continue to support, review and extend the scheme ... much work remains to be done.'*

IV. ISSUES

METHODOLOGY

Apart from those criticisms expressed in the HMI reports discussed in Chapter III, there has been a growing awareness in the graded objectives movement that perhaps the time has come to shift the emphasis from detailing syllabus content and the format of testing devices towards a statement of clearly defined methodological principles. In other words, having put a lot of work into describing **what** it is that should be taught as a minimum syllabus, all groups should now be considering more closely **how** that content can be effectively put into practice in the classroom.

It should, however, be said that various groups are already taking this idea on board. Essex, for example, now concentrates on the development of methodology and materials in its in-service training programme as a matter of policy. At the time of writing (spring 1987) Lancashire and Cumbria are producing a video cassette showing examples of good classroom practice aimed at implementing their graded objectives scheme, for use in the dual-county INSET programme. Mention should also be made of all the practical advice which John Clarke and Judith Hamilton included in Syllabus Guidelines (*CILT* 1984) as spokespeople for the well established Lothian scheme, which provided methodological guidance from the beginning. Without a properly conceived methodology, of course, GOML schemes run the risk of falling into exactly that danger which HMI identified, that the testing syllabus becomes the teaching syllabus, language practice becomes language rehearsal and implicit restrictions are then placed upon any form of generative or creative language or the transference of items from one context to another.

As second and sometimes third generation GOML syllabuses are produced, so the contextual emphasis has moved away from the purely transactional with the pupil as mini-tourist to a more broadly-based topic-related approach concentrating on themes of individual interest to pupils rather than on an imposed scenario which for a large number of pupils would never become reality. Hence the revised OMLAC syllabuses covered eight or nine 'communication areas' running across all languages and levels.

The communicative approach

If one methodology could be said to progressively characterise the implementation of graded objectives schemes in classrooms, it would have to be what has become known as the 'communicative' approach. Just as much as an implicit methodology it could be described as an attitude to teaching languages and runs formally counter to both grammar-translation and the behaviourist pattern drills of the 1960s. It is an attempt to make language teaching and practice more meaningful, purposeful and authentic, given the artificial confines of the classroom. Broadly speaking this approach has nine or ten key features which can be outlined here giving examples where possible. All stem from a belief that language learning is more effective when the target language is being used for the communication of meaning.

Firstly there is some intention to mean, i.e. language is used in a purposeful way. Questions are asked and answered with specific aims in mind, rather than simply to practise structure or lexis for its own sake. For example, the old chestnut, *'qu'est-ce que c'est?'* or *'was ist das?'* does not have any real purpose as a question, apart from practising the use of the definite or indefinite article. However, referring the same questions to a series of photographs taken from unusual angles such as can be found in puzzle magazines, gives the exercise a wholly different purpose and still practises the definite and indefinite article. Alternatively, *'qu'est-ce que c'est en français?'* would add a more meaningful dimension to the question.

If real communication is going to take place then again there must be some point to a question being asked or an answer being given. There usually exists an 'information gap' or an 'opinion gap' which can be filled during a conversation. As a pair-work activity this exercise is often carried out in a situation where one partner has information which the other one does not have and the former attempts to elicit that information from his or her partner.

This is often practised using separate pictures with in-built differences, along the lines of the *'jeu des sept différences'*, but neither party sees the other's picture. Differences are established through discussion in the language in pairs or groups.

Practising the time can also be made more meaningful by using the international time zone chart. Thus instead of asking the time when all parties can see what the time is by looking at the clock, *'quelle heure est-il à Montreal en ce moment'* becomes a much more meaningful question.

Another facet of this approach is that of personalisation. Pupils are encouraged to talk and write about themselves, their families and friends and individual interests. Class and school surveys can be mounted to encourage pupils to ask each other questions on any number of topics such as likes and dislikes, pocket money or the time at which they have to be in at night.

Class-to-class exchanges are also a useful way of personalising communication between a British class and one from a school in France, Germany or Spain, ideally the exchange school. Printed and recorded messages exchanged in this way, usually based on topic areas such as family, house and home, daily routine or free-time activities for example can then form the basis of some very interesting and motivating material for exploitation in the classroom. Inevitably, the messages are accompanied by picture post cards, labels, press cuttings and other types of realia which can supplement normal course material. Fuller details of this type can be found in an article by Barry Jones called 'Contacts sans voyage' in *Using authentic resources for teaching French* (*CILT* 1984).

The unpredictable or unforeseen elements form an important part of this approach and pupils need to be taught how to deal with the unexpected in replies to stock questions for example. The York French Level 5, which has been adapted by the NEA for its GCSE examinations, contains lots of examples of this sort.

The legitimacy of tasks and activities, as indicated in the first point, is central to this approach, because genuine tasks have a greater motivational force. One example is the use of diaries to arrange an outing or date. Coupled to the reading of the entertainments page of a newspaper to see what is available and the need to leave a note for a member of the host family, this activity combines use of all the four macro-skills in one. The use of diaries can also authenticate the use of past and future tenses, i.e. 'what did you do? what are you going to do?'

Identifying 'wanted' people from descriptions given by eye-witnesses is another example of a task-based activity. One partner could have a set of pictures or 'mug shots' and the other their descriptions. The face has then to be matched to the description.

The underlying assumption of the communicative approach is that the target language be used as the means of instruction and communication in the classroom. If a number of pupils do not understand a certain point one member of the class can be appointed as interpreter.

The approach to error is based on emphasising positive reward rather than negative penalisation of the 'half mark off for every mistake' variety. In fact, it has been found useful to draw a distinction between errors and mistakes. Errors are the result of incorrect rules being formulated in the minds of the learners and are revealing of the strategies they use to formulate language. In contrast we call 'mistakes' those faulty utterances for which the learner, if questioned, knows the rule. Both need to be judged in the context of effective communication.

A wider use of authentic materials generally helps prepare pupils for eventual exposure to the media of the target culture, whilst at the same time providing examples of real language in context, in contrast to the contrived passages and dialogues of traditional language courses which J Dakin referred to as 'structure speech'. Authentic texts present a challenge to the resourcefulness of both the teacher and the learner in terms of understanding and exploitation. Preparation is important, as is the ability to spot key words and cognates, the encouragement of understanding for gist and the use of a pocket dictionary. In general terms the difficulty of the text is not the crucial factor, unless of course it is unsuitable from the point of view of content. What is important is the way in which tasks based on the text are graded, something which is in the control of the teacher whereas the complexity of the text may be less so.

Finally, pupils are encouraged to draw a distinction between the spoken and written language and to see that the latter is not simply the former written down but that they both reflect two separate registers.

Presentation of new language items

The principles of a communicative methodology outlined in this chapter presuppose to a large degree a certain level of language competence which would enable pairs of pupils to engage meaningfully in the target language.

This competence is of course not arrived at from the beginning, but is reached by a gradual process of input and practice moving slowly from a situation where the learners are dependent on the teacher and the latter dominates both the presentation and the choice of language to one where the learners are increasingly independent and controlling the communication in which they are taking part. Within this progression the teacher also moves from being the principal stimulus to being a helper and listener.

One place where this progression is clearly laid out with concrete examples is in the Teacher's Resource Book of the new generation German course, *Deutsch heute*, which is in part based on the German GOML syllabus for Leicestershire. It is included here as one possible model of a staged approach to teaching and learning. In the introduction to Book 2 the authors delineate three specific stages which are of course not unique to this book, but have been elaborated elsewhere.

Presentation
Pre-communicative activity
Communicative activity

1. Presentation

This can take a variety of forms, depending on the goal and the appropriateness of teacher talk, tape, visuals or the written word. The use of visual clues and of the overhead projector as an integral part of the teaching practice was one of the positive findings highlighted by classroom research done under the auspices of the Language Teaching Centre at York University (Sanderson 1982). This particular course which owes a great deal to the authors' experience of the Leicestershire graded objectives scheme, puts into practice many of the other findings of this research.

These include the necessity to present material in small manageable learning units and the need to specify clear learning goals which are attainable. Students should be involved in classroom activity and there should be a variety of activities used within each lesson. The foreign language should be used extensively in class and language should be graded in difficulty so as to allow a maximum sense of success for students.

During the presentational stage the teacher dominates and there is no autonomy on the part of pupils, although clearly they are involved in a process of internalisation of language and making connections and intuitive guesses. They are, however, able to make more and more choice between alternatives, to repeat language and actively integrate new elements into existing knowledge. Students are copying, imitating, listening and reacting, in short, learning to do but as yet initiating little.

2. Pre-communicative activity

The immediately pre-communicative phase is an important stage as it is impossible to pass from the presentational stage to autonomy in a non-communicative manner, as is witnessed by those many 'successful' '0' level candidates who were barely able to speak the language to any effect because of lack of opportunity to practise the language in a meaningful way.

In this phase there exist two important elements, first an uncertainty on the part of the recipient of the communication and second an element of choice on the part of the speaker or writer. At the same time the field of the content should remain within that defined by the first stage so that students do not go outside the realms of their knowledge or are overburdened with unknowns.

Pre-communicative activity falls between the public arena of teacher to class and the private context of pupil to pupil exchange. Activities within it should therefore satisfy the following criteria:

1. The teacher can monitor what is going on in order to help or correct.
2. The rest of the class can witness the exchange.
3. The speaker has the possibility of choice of utterance.
4. For the listener, there is some uncertainty about the message being received, although he or she is aware of the field of communication.
5. The field of communication is restricted so learners are not overburdened by form and content.

The degree to which the emphasis is shifted from teacher control towards student autonomy is dependent on where the activity is placed between Phase 1 and 3.

An example is given in the Teacher's Resource Book on pages 54 and 55. Students are asked to choose from a table an identity for themselves including a name, an age, a place to live, family details and pets and hobbies . Partners then convey the information to each other in front of the class. The teacher listens and the class can check the information on the table. Thus there is choice for the speaker, uncertainty for the listener and yet the subject matter is circumscribed.

Alternatively the same could be done with personal descriptions from the table below.

Name	Größe	Haare	Augen	Gesicht	Kleidung
Inge	1.70	braun	blau	lang	Hose
Brigitte	1.60	schwarz	braun	breit	Hemd
Monika	1.55	blond	grau	rund	Jeans
Andrea	1.48	glatt	grün	schmal	Pulli
Ulrike	1.65	wellig	groß	oval	Rock
Jörg	1.50	kurz	klein		Kleid
Frank	1.52	lang	schön		Shorts
Bernhard	1.71	dunkel			Anorak
Peter	1.49	hell			Mütze

The teacher could also give descriptions to pupils who then give back their own descriptions using opposites or totally new descriptions which are chosen from the table.

The same can be done with details of where people live such as the type of dwelling, the location, the length of time lived there.

Train time-tables are another possibility. Here students have a blank form to fill in as other pupils give details of times, destination and platform. The information does not need to be completely true and the details can be mixed up. If more times are given than destinations then student choice is extended still further.

Abreise	Richtung	Ankunft	Gleis
09.56	Hamm	12.12	1
19.45	Linberg	18.40	6
04.15	Urwinkl	19.20	9
14.30	Oberburg	22.18	4
23.05	Halde	14.10	18
usw		usw	

To make the descriptions actively more communicative, separate cards are issued to partner A and partner B. A has the card with the true details of an individual on it, B has unreliable details on his/her card and must try to elicit the correct information from A and check back afterwards. Alternatively one partner could draw a 'photo-fit' face which the other one describes. When the student has experienced sufficient independent but monitored practice from this phase, the next stage can be entered into.

3. Communicative phase

This stage is designed to reveal and further develop the competence which has been the objective of the teaching thus far. It resembles Phase 2 in that there is still uncertainty for the listener and choice for the speaker and the field of communication is still relatively restricted, although clearly less so.

The main difference between this phase and the previous one is that whereas during the pre-communicative phase most of the communication involves the whole class, here the material for exchange is available to individuals only and therefore only one pair of students can be monitored at a time. The teacher must then be confident of the pupil's ability to reinforce correct language and not simply muddle through, compounding errors.

Many examples of communicative activity are given in the Teacher's Resource Book of this particular course to supplement those given in the first part of this chapter. Other published sources are given below. The *Take your partners* series also has a non-language specific edition which can be used for any language as well as French and German.

FRENCH:

Take your partners: Pairwork French. Macmillan (1986).

Tu Parles and tu parles encore. Arnold-Wheaton (1986 and 1987 respectively).

Toi et moi. Nelson/Harrap (1987).

GERMAN:

Take your partners: Pairwork German. Macmillan (1986).

Abgemacht! Arnold-Wheaton (1987).

Zu zweit. Hodder and Stoughton (1986).

Practical examples

The two sections which follow are both connected to the Lancashire and Cumbria GOML scheme. The first is a series of guidelines on methodology to accompany the new TEFL syllabus and the second is an extract from the HMI Report, dealt with in Section III, of this book. Appendix 8 gives a series of classroom studies of what the HMI team felt to be good examples of teaching and learning as they observed them. Generally they are of a traditionally teacher-centred type and should perhaps be viewed in the context of developments such as OCEA.

1. Whilst this is a testing rather than a teaching syllabus, a set of objectives intended to be 'communicative' imply appropriate method. The guidelines below are intended to give practical help for the successful teaching of the objectives and this will be reflected in the testing and certification.

The teaching of each unit should be a preparation for performance within the situation described. The student must at least acquire the ability to convey messages effectively in speech and to understand the most likely questions or responses; he/she will also need to understand all or the gist of any signs, notices or other reading materials likely to be encountered within each situation.

Successful preparation of students will therefore include such communicative strategies as the following:

Oral/Aural

Students should be given maximum exposure to the target language, with the teacher using it for all aspects of classroom management.

New vocabulary will generally be introduced visually, e.g. via OHP, drawings, flashcards, realia. These words will then be set into a context which will introduce the appropriate structures, e.g. a dialogue, miming.

The syllabus is intended as a minimum rather than a maximum and students should be gradually exposed to a variety of questions and responses likely to be encountered in the situations outlined, i.e. 'gist' aural comprehension.

The teacher should encourage students not to panic when they understand only the gist of what they hear rather than every word.

Students should be given the opportunity of hearing a variety of voices via audio and video tapes.

Learners must be given maximum opportunity to develop their oral skills. This implies students talking to each other rather than simply responding to the teacher, i.e. a less teacher-centred approach with a flexible arrangement of classroom furniture.

Features of such teaching will be frequent use of rôle play, games, pair work, group work and simulations, with the teacher setting up and monitoring such activities.

After the student's confidence has been developed by the use of tightly structured activities of this kind teachers should progress to the setting of more challenging and creative tasks, such as the introduction of unexpected factors which reflect the unpredictability of real life situations, i.e. problem solving.

The use of information gap activities can also provide a basis for the authentic use of communicative language. Such activities require the learners to use their language skills to elicit unknown information from others such as a fellow student or teacher. For example, student A is given a fictitious personal profile to be discovered by appropriate questioning from student B.

Information gapping and problem solving are seen as particularly relevant to the development of abler students' language skills.

Such activities as those described above imply the setting of purposeful tasks relevant to the particular situation and the use of appropriate teaching materials as stimuli, e.g. actual timetables, menus, maps, pictures, realia.

These activities should be as varied and enjoyable as possible in order to provide effective reinforcement without diminishing motivation.

Emphasis should be placed in oral work upon the ability to convey a message effectively and with confidence. Absolute accuracy in grammar and pronunciation will be relegated to a secondary role. Translation methods are inappropriate.

Any grammar needed to perform tasks within a particular situation should be taught with a view to developing the learner's ability to manipulate structures orally rather than in an accurate written form. Whilst the learning of grammar is an essential ingredient of the development of manipulative skills it should be seen as a support to communication rather than an end in itself.

Reading/writing

Writing will form an essential part of the learning process but will be principally seen as an aid to the reinforcement of the other skill areas. New structures and vocabulary should be practised in aural and oral contexts before students are exposed to the written forms.

Reading skills will be a similarly important aid to the reinforcement of oral/aural skills.

In addition reading skills which exist independently of the spoken word, e.g. understanding signs, notices, etc, will need to be practised by exposure of students to appropriate realia.

Issues

The teacher should seek to develop in students the confidence and ability to cope with understanding only the gist of a written message.

This may best be developed by a gradual progression from the recognition of isolated words or phrases to the ability to understand them in a more extended context, e.g. in a menu, timetable or brochure containing unfamiliar vocabulary or structures.

Practice in reading comprehension of this kind can well be enhanced by the effective use of appropriate classroom display of authentic visual material which can stimulate student interest or act as a focus for classroom activities.

Integrated skills

Although certain lessons or parts of them may seek to emphasise discrete skill areas, usually teaching will integrate more than one skill, e.g. using a timetable as a stimulus for rôle play.

Culture background

All languages are set within a unique national context. This means that language activities will often need to be accompanied by illustration and/or explanation of cultural factors, e.g. buses, entertainments, food, attitudes to politeness, etc.

2. Some examples of successful learning (Appendix 8 from HMI report on Lancashire/Cumbria)

Some of the lessons inspected were outstanding in terms of successful participation by the pupils, who were learning and using the foreign language for a substantial part of the lesson, and indeed in some cases for all of it. The following examples outline the teaching strategies which enable pupils to succeed, and indicate the range of ability and age of those involved.

Year one

A top set learning German in an urban comprehensive was introduced to methods of transport and the syntactical rule for time/manner/place. The teacher used German all the time and supplemented the commercially produced flashcards with others of his own. Not only the content of the different phrases but also the correct intonation and emphasis were thoroughly practised at a pace which left no time for boredom. Oral practice was followed by a section where pupils worked in pairs to construct their own dialogues for presentation to the class. Merit points were awarded for pronunciation, fluency and dramatic reality. Pupils' performances were in some cases excellent and uniformly enthusiastic, with a good deal of new ground covered in the 70 minutes.

In another urban comprehensive, able pupils in a French lesson (second half of a 70 minute period) were introduced to the visitor in French and then returned to the class activity of guessing the contents (various fruit/vegetables) of the teacher's shopping bag. Each object was commented on in French by the teacher; for instance, she explained her reasons for buying the items and subjected the pupils to a barrage of examples practising the use of the partitive article in connection with the central figure in the chapter from the textbook. The pupils worked well until fatigue set in after about 55 minutes, when the activity switched to writing a list of things available in the grocer's shop, using the partitive article. The level of pupils' work was mainly good and the use of French almost total.

In another urban comprehensive school, pupils of medium ability introduced themselves in French telling their visitor not only their names but also the languages they speak and those they would like to speak. Using overhead projector transparencies they asked the way to various places in a town, gave directions in reply to the teacher's questions, and ordered items in a café. Then most pupils in the class had the opportunity to shown a flashcard to the class, act the part of a waiter and nominate a pupil to answer; all this was done at a tremendous pace, with instant answers and very high accuracy. Next, two songs were played (on cassette) and sung by the pupils. This was followed by a tape recording with rapid comprehension questions and a satisfying proportion of pupils volunteering answers. This was a very varied 35-minute lesson in which pupils were kept busy and showed considerable confidence in what they had learned; the whole lesson was in French.

A mixed ability group in a rural comprehensive contributed in French a list of the locations which they might wish to visit on their school trip to Brittany in the summer. Then the teacher performed actions, imitated by pupils, simultaneously with practising examples of new verbs (swimming, playing, etc) to be learned: she also paid particular attention to intonation patterns indicating pleasure/disinclination, with pupils giving good responses. Flashcards were skillfully used to practise saying one's location and destination. Pupils then wrote down their own choices of location and destination before being questioned. Next, a tape recording was played (topic: sports and likes/dislikes); pupils drew pictures to illustrate what they heard and tried to remember the original French on the tape. Comprehension was tested both in French and in English, in a supportive and encouraging manner, followed by a memory test in French. Finally, pupils practised short dialogues in pairs. Each pair was assigned a number and were selected to perform their sketch by cards bearing their number. The level of interest and enthusiasm was high, less able as well as abler pupils were encouraged to feel they were succeeding, and most of the 60-minute lesson was conducted in French, apart from explanation of new activities and occasional comprehension questions. Superb wall displays contributed substantially to the pupils' learning.

Another group representing the full range of ability was gathered round a table bearing eighteen different articles assembled by the teacher. Pupils identified the articles, using the appropriate expression of quantity, and then acted the part of a customer; all pupils participated and oral performance was very good, with success and motivation underpinned by limited but appropriate demands.

In a parallel class in the same school, during the latter half of a 70-minute lesson on shopping dialogues, the teacher played dialogues on the cassette recorder while pupils followed the text in their books. This was followed by questions on the text and **around** the text, with the teacher speaking French all the time and obtaining good responses from many pupils . Two were selected to read a dialogue in front of the class, then all read the dialogues in pairs, with great enthusiasm. Next, pupils completed, in their exercise books, a gapped conversation in a baker's shop; even the weakest pupil coped, apart from some spelling errors. A game of 'I spy' in French concluded an obviously well-prepared and varied lesson, enthusiastically received by the pupils.

It was pleasing to find groups of pupils with learning difficulties who were nonetheless deriving pleasure and achieving success in French, given their particular level of ability and the limited objectives which teachers had set them. In some schools such pupils would have had no opportunity to learn French. In one rural comprehensive, a teacher with remedial experience had constructed a series of board games to practise word-matching, phrase identification and numbers. Pupils were eager to give simple information about themselves in French, their folders of work showed careful copying of French phrases and an attempt at neatness coupled with an ingenuous pride in their achievement. A similar group in an urban secondary modern school were making outstanding efforts at accurate pronunciation of new vocabulary associated with asking directions. The teacher avoided English as far as possible in her presentation, relying on a combination of commercial and home-made flashcards. Pupils' French intonation was unusually good, considering their general learning difficulties. As in the preceding instance, their written work was careful and their art work in the accompanying illustrations was in some cases of excellent quality. The 35-minute lesson ended with a guessing game sustained with outstanding enthusiasm.

Year two

In an urban comprehensive, a group comprising pupils of low linguistic ability and some with learning difficulties who had not learned any French at all in their first year, first of all rehearsed their names, addresses and ways of asking people to repeat or speak more slowly. The teacher then asked them to imagine they were in a cafe and to say what they would like to eat: this produced 25-30 responses, all intelligible and most of them pronounced extremely well, which would compare favourably with those of more able pupils. Next, the class had to guess a café item which the teacher had written down, winning a point if they guessed correctly in less than ten questions. This was followed by an imaginative presentation of the notion 'I like/dislike', in which the teacher showed flashcards of various activities and the class spontaneously called out 'oui' or 'non', at first according to the teacher's likes/dislikes, then according to their own. Later the teacher placed the cards in different parts of the room, repeated the same sentences and pupils pointed to the appropriate cards. Next the pupils repeated the sentence if it corresponded to the card held up by the teacher, but remained silent if it did not. Lip-reading of the same sentences followed, with great enthusiasm and success. Finally, the teacher mimed the activity and the class volunteered the answer, using the newly learned structure. The success of these twenty pupils was due to two major tactics: firstly, they had heard the teacher use the sentences many times in a variety of entertaining contexts, and secondly, they had not written out the expressions which they had rehearsed, relying entirely on auditory memory supported by visual association. This example shows that it is erroneous to assume that slow learners need continual support in English and cannot memorise the foreign language.

In another urban comprehensive, pupils of medium ability in the second half of a 70-minute German lesson were asked about possible destinations and how they travel there. The teacher asked several open-ended questions; for instance, who owned a bicycle or where one could still travel by tram in Britain. Conversation was related to finding one's way to places in the local town. Pupils had to remember how various shops were situated in relation to each other, which film was being shown at the cinema, when the disco took place, and so forth. The lesson was notable for relating content to pupils' individual experience, for its exploitation of the information gap, for a high level of pupil involvement and an attempt to use the foreign language as extensively as possible.

Some lessons for the ablest pupils, one of which is quoted at para 5.5, provided noteworthy examples of pupils being intellectually extended. In another urban school pupils listened to the teacher explaining, in excellent French and at natural conversational speed, what they would be doing in the lesson. Past and conditional tenses were used by the teacher and understood by the group, whose correct reactions to instructions indicated their high level of comprehension. They read confidently and fluently, albeit with some errors - corrected in French by the teacher - from a dialogue in their textbook. Then, the teacher posed questions, based on a map, about the geography and products of different regions of France. Answers were sensitively corrected in French. Finally, pupils wrote answers to questions on what they had been learning, with the teacher's briefing given entirely in the foreign language, as were replies to requests for guidance. The level of participation was very good and the pupils' work, both oral and written, was of high standard.

Year three

Outstanding imaginative planning was the recipe for success in a 70-minute French lesson for a top set in an urban comprehensive in an area of high unemployment. Copies of a French provincial newspaper were distributed and a lively session of questions and answers on the TV programme page ensued. Pupils were then asked questions in French, relating to a wall map of Central and Western France and to the year of origin (1945) of the paper. A brief digression into English illuminated the historical background to the founding of the paper. The lesson then switched back to French, with the pupils consulting telephone numbers of local emergency and information services in the newspaper. A pupil looked up SAUMUR in the French telephone code book and the teacher explained, in French, how to ring a French number from the pupil's home town. After practising a series of telephone numbers, the pupils read an article about a French boy winning a video game computer in a competition. Straightforward comprehension questions on the text led to questions about the number of pupils who have home computers, the makes of equipment, computer studies in the school, and so on. A number of puzzles in the newspapers were used to practise figures, then the elements of the TV programme were analysed. Finally, the possible problems of an exchange visit and ways of solving or avoiding them were discussed in French as a basis for a written homework task. A great deal of French was spoken in the 70 minutes, pupils' comprehension was for the most part very good, and their enthusiasm was evident. This stemmed from the intrinsically interesting, authentic material used in the lesson, the teacher's rapport with the class and the feeling of personal success which pupils were deriving.

In a rural comprehensive, in a 60-minute German lesson, pupils practised in pairs a dialogue which they had written previously. Pairs were selected to perform their sketch by the teacher choosing a card bearing the assigned number of the team in question. Excellent little scenes of car breakdowns were well enacted, with a genuine attempt at characterisation and correct intonation patterns, in sometimes quite complex situations. Pupils made some errors, but kept the conversation going for about one minute. Next a banner made from used computer paper and showing vocabulary related to the new topic - travelling and reading timetables - was gradually extended across the classroom; the teacher illustrated the new vocabulary by miming or by including it in a framework of known language. Flashcards with missing letters or jumbled words were used to 'fix' the new vocabulary, then pupils were nominated by the numbered card method to guess which card the teacher would display. This was developed into a team game. A section of the lesson was then devoted to writing down the new expressions. Next, the teacher distributed copies of an authentic timetable for a river and lake boat service, from which pupils were asked to write down words they recognised. The pupils then told the teacher in German what information they had gleaned from the sheet. High motivation was apparent throughout, some of the pupils' oral work was outstandingly good, and apart from the English used to explain and introduce activities a great deal of German was used during this long lesson.

In a 35-minute French lesson for pupils of medium ability in an urban comprehensive, a tape recording was used in conjunction with an OHP transparency to practise understanding requests for directions and to identify the names of people looking for the different places. Most pupils gave very accurate answers. They were then required to recall the questions on the tape, again with good responses, especially from the boys. Visuals were then used to elicit the types of tickets available at a station, and a worksheet gave a dozen examples of different destinations. Towns used in the exercise were referred to on the map of France displayed in the classroom. This was a very well developed lesson with oral participation at some stage, albeit at a simple level, by every pupil in the class, and with virtually the whole lesson conducted in the foreign language.

Year four

The majority of the fourth year lessons visited were concerned with objectives other than GOML. Nevertheless, a few interesting examples of classroom practice were encountered, two of which are quoted below.

Pupils in a rural comprehensive were following a course leading to the JMB's 16+ examinations in French. In the latter part of an hour's lesson they studied a page extracted from a French telephone directory, which dealt with the procedure for making international calls. An expertly designed worksheet enabled them to focus on salient points in the authentic text and they were permitted to use dictionaries for reference. The lesson concluded with an ingenious game which required pupils to simulate asking the exchange for a certain subscriber number, which was held by one of the other twenty pupils. The teacher encouraged pupils to speak the numbers as rapidly as possible, thus requiring maximum concentration on the part of the listeners. Oral work was good, the pace grew faster, and the enthusiasm and confidence radiated by these pupils was of the highest order.

In an urban comprehensive, the teacher used the overhead projector as a basis for questions and answers, in French, relating to jobs and professions. The teacher's invitation for comments, in French, on mistakes made by other pupils elicited some useful if limited responses from this group of motivated, although not very able pupils. Some very relevant language was used, with many references to pupils' own experience. The class was then divided into small groups. Each pupil received a card, written in French, which described a different profession or job. Pupils discussed in French the various jobs of their fellows, urging each other to continue, and displayed outstanding readiness to use the foreign language.

GRAMMAR IN GRADED OBJECTIVES SCHEMES

In the style and content of foreign language teaching against which the graded objectives system was a reaction grammatical accuracy, and grammatical accuracy in the written word particularly, was the major objective. It is therefore not surprising if teaching language for communication was seen, at least in the first instance, as a liberation from the necessity of teaching grammar. At last teachers felt they could with a good conscience teach their pupils to buy a coffee and lemonade in a French café without having to convey at the same time that one of the nouns was masculine and the other feminine and the articles had to be correct. Consequently, in the early schemes no mention was made of grammar at all.

In the York syllabus, as we have seen, only the tasks to be completed (e.g. buying stamps and souvenirs) were prescribed and the linguistic content was left entirely to the teacher. The Oxford scheme prescribed everything the learner was expected to know except grammatical content. Only one statement says anything about grammar:

> *'Adjectives have been given in masculine forms. It is assumed that the feminine would be known as appropriate. Similarly, where verbs with* il *are given,* elle, ils *or* elles *should be used as appropriate.'*

The rest of the syllabus shows that the use of the imperative, the infinitive, various parts of the verb, the direct object pronoun, possessive adjectives, etc is expected to be known. None of this is listed as such, however. The teacher/learner is expected to gather the information from the syllabus implications rather than have it presented in a separate list. This was very probably a conscious decision. Grammar had dominated language teaching for so long that its position had to be reviewed. It had to be put in its proper place - that is as serving meaning and not as having an independent existence of its own. The Oxford syllabus expresses this view by making no explicit statements about grammar though it is very explicit about everything else.

The York and Oxfordshire syllabuses had a considerable influence and many subsequent schemes followed the same pattern. The Lancashire/Cumbria scheme, for example, which rapidly became the biggest in the country, has no grammatical section in its syllabus. The Leeds is a relatively small scheme. In its first syllabuses, which were based on topics taken from the Council of Europe's *Waystage* and expressed in tasks within those topics, there was no mention of grammar as such. For example, in Level 3 (topic, leisure interests/self, relatives, friends), the language behaviour required is defined thus:

> '*Recent past leisure activities, holidays* (qu'est-ce tu as fait ce weekend? Où est-ce que tu as passé les vacances de Pâques? Qu'est-ce que tu as vu à la télé hier soir)'.

This is the only indication that a knowledge of the perfect tense is required.

The full effect of the work of the Council of Europe was, however, soon felt. Just as *Threshold Level* and *Niveau Seuil* list the grammar necessary for a level of communicative competence, so did schemes which embraced their philosophy. The Lothian scheme was the first to make systematic use of the Council of Europe's work and it makes its grammatical implications explicit.

In the introduction to *Syllabus Guidelines 1: Communication*, (*CILT* 1984) John Clark writes:

> *'The suggested grammar has been extracted from the language exponents used in the functional/notional part of the syllabus. If we wish pupils to internalise ways in which particular elements in a language resource can be combined with others and used flexibly and creatively in order to mean particular things in particular contexts, then we must be concerned with grammar. Without the internalisation of a system pupils would merely be able to regurgitate set phrases, or produce arbitrary combinations of single words which would certainly not effect communication in the real world. An internalised grammar based on a notional approach to the selection of forms should enable learners to be able to understand and to express essential notions such as 'time', 'sequence', 'cause and effect', 'quantity', 'special relationship', etc at the earliest stages by providing them with a few key forms. They do not necessarily have to be able to control the entire range of grammatical or vocabulary forms associated with these particular notions, the notion of 'past time', for instance, can be realised at the early stages through one particular tense form or through use of words such as 'yesterday' or 'last week' without full mastery of the entire past tense system in all its ramifications and irregularities. We must beware of overloading pupils with too many grammar forms at one time in a search for unattainable native speaker accuracy. It is important for teachers to realise that the grammar that they teach and the system that learners find for themselves through communicative experience, will automatically give rise to systematic errors (as well as unsystematic mistakes) at every stage. These systematic errors may arise from a number of sources - a misunderstood rule, an over-generalised rule, an incorrectly drawn hypothesis, etc. Any grammar system that is not complete will necessarily mean that if the learners operate it to*

> *their own ends they will make errors. These must therefore be expected, since they cannot possibly be avoided.'*

He then goes on to illustrate some of the difficulties that may arise in classroom use. Although he raises the question of what to do about grammatical errors in communicative language teaching, he cautiously refrains from suggesting answers:

> *'There would seem to be few clear answers to the question posed. In order to be able to cope with errors, teachers need to be aware of what occurs and why, and they need to be sensitive to the particular pupil and to the particular circumstances in which errors occur...for the moment a judicious mixture of common sense, classroom experience, and the insights provided by language learning theory is all that we have to go on.'*

The problem of how to evaluate grammatical error which does not interfere with the conveying of the message is not dealt with. The caveat is added, however:

> *'The conscious formal study and practice of the forms of a language will not by itself lead to the effective internalisation of a language resource with which to effect understanding and communication in real life tasks. It was therefore suggested in the introduction in Part 1 that a balance between formal study and practice, skill development exercises, and communicative experience be maintained, and that a link be forged between the two in a systematic way.'*

The syllabus contains a list of grammatical points that are first set out by types of sentence used in expressing functions (giving information; requests, offers and suggestions; etc) and then under the more conventional metalanguage titles. Occasional explanatory notes are offered. The one concerning verbs illustrates aptly the way grammar is approached from the communicative end rather than the structural one:

> *'For productive purposes, learners can operate on the basis that a verb is an '-er' verb unless they have learned to the contrary. Thus, for most verbs, they can operate on the basis of a simple 'two-sound system' to express present, past, and future. Thus, using the verb* "manger" *as an example, the two sound-forms* /māz/ *and* /māze/ *can be learned.'*

As has been mentioned, the Lothian scheme also rewards grammatical accuracy with its 'level of performance' system of marking.

Eric Garner, the inspirer of the West Sussex scheme, acknowledged his debt to both the Council of Europe and John Clark

> *'Of all the influences which have assisted us in the conception and realisation of the Level 1 package, the most important has been the work of the Council of Europe researchers in specifying adult language learning schemes based on graded levels of achievement* (Threshold Level, Waystage and Niveau Seuil)

> *and the application of these ideas in the Lothian Regional Study Group's French Level 1 syllabus. We are especially indebted to John Clark (Assistant Adviser, Lothian) whose syllabus was the first one of the "Graded tests" movement to be developed systematically along the "functional-notional" lines suggested by the Council of Europe and who shared his thinking so freely and generously with us.'*

In that scheme, too, the grammar is made explicit. Garner says:

> *'Perhaps the most clear cut distinction between a notional, functional syllabus and one of conventional design, is that whereas the latter selects language to illustrate grammatical categories, the former takes as its starting point acts of communication, with grammar seen as a necessary but subservient by-product of the communicative act.'*

Again, how grammar is to be taught is largely left to the individual teacher, only a statement of general principle is given:

> *'... thus on the basis of use the key forms will eventually be built up and generalised within appropriate topic areas. The decision as to how far and by what means grammar should be "formalised" with particular groups of learners will obviously depend on the teacher's judgement.'*

A warning is given that when grammar is to serve communicative needs the decontextualised learning of grammatical rules is ineffective:

> *'An overriding consideration in selecting and practising grammatical items should be the need to put them to immediate use, with grammatical teaching envisaged only within the context of communication, but it should be remembered that the teaching of grammatical "rules" in the abstract to younger learners is of little real value and may be counter productive.'*

The East Midland scheme is again unique in its treatment of grammar. Like many other schemes its syllabus lists functions and tasks to be carried out in the context of a given topic but contains no indication of the grammar implied. The scheme does, however, give a particular status to grammar both in the procedure and the assessment of the writing tasks.

> *'Grammatically the writing of the report on the scenario engages the children in focussing their attention on differences in the spoken and written forms of the first, second (intimate and formal) and the third persons of the verbs they are using.'*

Later there is added:

> *'The written tasks function differently from the spoken tasks in another way as well: they help in the differentiation between the more and less able in the examined population.'*

Since one of the important items in the written task is its grammatical features, it would seem that it is this above all which is being used to make decisions about ability. The other principle in operation here, that of making learners conscious of the grammatical soundness of their utterances is found also in the modern languages part of the Oxford Certificate of Educational Achievement (see Chapter V). In the Talking and Writing section one of the Achievement Areas is grammar: the sub-divisions for Talking are:

> '(a) I can make myself understood in spite of making a lot of mistakes in my grammar.
> (b) I can consistently make myself clearly understood with not too many mistakes in my grammar.
> (c) I can consistently make myself understood and my grammar is accurate.

Those for Writing are similar. This makes it clear to learners and others that accurate grammar is part of language proficiency even if it has little effect on communication in the sense of making one's message understood.

In more recent graded objectives schemes the practice has generally been to include a grammatical inventory. In the Durham scheme one column contains the grammar suggested for the realisation of the tasks listed in another column. In the Buckinghamshire scheme the grammar is set out in a similar way. In the Berkshire scheme the grammar is listed but said to be 'extracted and formalised' from the functions and notions. In the Cambridgeshire scheme each Simulation includes a set of what are called Structures. These are, however, not points of grammar but exemplar phrases which can be used in the Simulation. They include no grammatical explanation that could show how they might be manipulated to produce analogous phrases, nor are they grouped in any way which would suggest they could be used for such a purpose. They are in many ways similar to the Target Sentences which were listed in the early East Midlands syllabuses but which were subsequently dispensed with because they were being taken as prescribed utterances that had to be known.

We thus have two main traditions established. In one, grammar is not included in the syllabus as such; it is left to be inferred from the tasks set. In the assessment accurate grammar may or may not be rewarded on its own account; some schemes accept communication of the message irrespective of formal accuracy, others reward it with extra marks.

In the second tradition, a grammatical inventory is included in the syllabus and grammatical accuracy is generally, though not always, taken account of in the assessment. In theory the inventory is drawn from the notions, functions and tasks. In fact, these are susceptible of such a wide variety of realisations in grammatical terms that the inventories in the end owe as much to the intuitive decisions of the syllabus writers as to the communicative exigencies of the tasks in the syllabus. John Clark's statement in the Lothian syllabus assumes that the grammar listed is needed in order to enable the learner to communicate more widely and more precisely. It is highly debatable as to what extent this is in fact the case. In the Berkshire syllabus the statement that the grammar is 'extracted and formalised' suggests that the grammar listed is necessary and only that grammar is necessary to accomplish the tasks set. It is in fact quite possible to extract and formalise different grammar or extra grammar from the notions and functions listed. The lists in both the Durham and Buckinghamshire schemes are, in the end, only loosely connected to the actual requirements of the syllabus in terms of communicating the message. All these three schemes - Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Durham - recognise this at least unconsciously by insisting that communication is to be rewarded irrespective of formal accuracy. Durham's instruction to teachers can stand as the fairly typical principle now applied:

> *The guiding principle for assessment of items on Cartes-Echelons will be: 'Has the item been "duly performed" to the teacher's satisfaction?'*
> *What is to be understood by "DULY PERFORMED" ...? The teachers should take into consideration the context in which communication occurs and make allowances for minor errors of grammar or pronunciation which, in these circumstances, do not obscure the message.*
> *An activity would therefore be considered 'duly performed' if a message was passed, received and understood in a way which a teacher of French would deem understandable to a French speaking person.'*

In the end none of us has really asked ourselves the question: what is correct grammar for? Either we ignore incorrect grammar altogether as long as it does not interfere with comprehensibility or we reward correct grammar for its own sake. In the East Midlands and OCEA schemes this idea of grammar for its own sake is given an official status as a syllabus objective because undoubtedly there is a feeling that it must be right to persuade pupils to get it right.

The answer to our question may well lie in an extension of the concept of the 'sympathetic native speaker'. When it was decided to assess utterances for their communicative value irrespective of their grammatical form, some way of deciding whether the candidate had in fact communicated had to be found. What was postulated was that if the assessor felt that a 'sympathetic native speaker' would be able to understand, communication had been established. It was then possible to decide, for example, that the sympathetic native speaker might understand 'easily' or 'with difficulty' and so grade even a communicative performance. In the York scheme, at higher levels, there is one parameter which describes a possible utterance as one that 'would not offend a sympathetic speaker's ear' in order to limit extremes of pronunciation, intonation and grammatical inaccuracy. It is this effect on the sympathetic native speaker that may lead on to a description of the communicative value of correct grammar. In English, native speakers communicate flawlessly with phrases like 'I aven't wrote nothing' or 'e done it'. They also communicate the fact that they are people of limited education and, in certain circumstances, of limited social sensitivity. Quite frequently this sort of thing can lead to losing a job rather than getting it.

Similarly, in our use of the foreign language we give a social impression to our hearers which may lead them to modify their behaviour towards us. They may for example realise that they must speak slowly and distinctly, perhaps using 'caretaker' talk. A better performance might lead native speakers to speak at normal speed but using only standard language relevant to the immediate situation. A better performance still might suggest to native speakers that they need make no allowances at all except perhaps to avoid the more esoteric regionalisms or slang. These sorts of potential modifications of sympathetic native speaker behaviour according to the performance of the foreign speaker might well be susceptible of providing descriptions that would enable us to include grammatical accuracy in our communicative competence in a way which is not the case at the moment. It must be right to persuade our learners to use correct grammar, but we must have clear communicative reasons to convince them.

Already graded objectives schemes, like Buckinghamshire, are including wider educational aims which include social sensitivity. It is in that area perhaps that we will find communicative reasons for grammatical accuracy which our learners would find convincing. This could well be the next step in the evolution of graded objectives.

STANDARDISATION

Perhaps the single most distinguishing feature of the British Education system until recently has been its lack of central direction. Although individual LEAs have sometimes formed a policy for modern languages in local schools, more often than not individual schools have addressed themselves to the format of language teaching within them via the Head of Department. The only external reference nationally, in the past at least, has been the GCE 'O' level and CSE examinations which pupils eventually sat. Even these represented a diverse range of demands, in both content and, it has been argued, levels of difficulty.

The various graded objectives schemes which grew up from the mid-seventies reflected this situation. In April 1979 when *CILT* set up the first national conference in an attempt to bring together some of the disparate strands which were already developing, 42 separate initiatives existed in varying forms of development in different parts of the country. By September 1987 there were 82 different syllabuses in operation for French Level 1.

Since there are so many different forms of organisation and methods of work it is not surprising that, even though many schemes bear great general resemblance to one another, there are considerable differences in detail. Level 1 in French in Lancashire is not the same as Level 1 in French in West Sussex. Anxiety has occasionally been expressed about this on the grounds that such qualifications would have little meaning unless they were comparable. In practice, this has not proved to be the case. The certificates have their own validity for candidates and teachers. Where they need to be recognised outside, they carry a description of the tasks undertaken. The candidate has shown, for example, that she can shop for souvenirs and get a meal in a restaurant. Anyone interested, perhaps a potential employer, can therefore have some idea in practical terms of what the learner can do. This is, of course, more than can be said of public examinations, which provide no such practical details.

In the event, most schemes in general terms have more similarities than differences. Almost all include topics like getting directions in a strange town, shopping for souvenirs or other small items, obtaining food and drink in a café or restaurant, exchanging personal information with a contemporary. To these many add such things as dealing with various forms of travel, expressing personal needs, likes and dislikes, fatigue, illness and asking others about similar topics.

The question is often asked as to whether or not there will one day emerge a national GOML scheme, in the same way that GCSE will be a national examination from 1988. At the same time this notion needs to be countered with the question as to whether or not such a national system would be positively beneficial.

Even GCSE is not a fully standardised examination across the country. The five examining groups in England and Wales have admittedly had to conform to both the general and subject specific national criteria, but with a ten per cent leeway, which has enabled one group at least to retain traditional elements of the former examination. The fact that teachers are going out of their own areas to adopt syllabuses from other groups, points to the fact that they differ substantially in both approach and appeal, which is particularly remarkable given that this was an initiative introduced by a government with an ever increasing interest in central control of the curriculum.

Local GOML schemes on the other hand have resulted from the fervour of a dedicated group of teachers, usually working with an adviser and always developing ideas in a local context, in other words a grass roots or bottom up movement.

Apart from the difficulty of enforcing national syllabuses on schools (and even GCSE has not managed to do this) the difficulty of standardising graded levels across the country should not be underestimated. Firstly, various areas have implemented different numbers of levels. Durham, for example have three, *Niveau Fondamental*, *Niveau Moyen* and in relation to GCSE general and extended, eventually a *Niveau Superieur*. Cambridge has developed four levels to take in the full range of GCSE Mode 3 at the top, and West Sussex and York in common with many other schemes have five, roughly corresponding to the years of secondary schooling.

Even in the case of the joint OCEA project (see Chapter V), where the participating LEAs of Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and Somerset attempted at the initial stage of development to find some commonality of content, they managed only 70%. This concerned purely content, different topics were introduced at different times, and the usual debate on relative merits of skills testing and task-based assessment ensued. In the event it was decided to start with a new model from scratch.

Standardisation as a concept is not easy to define; do we mean that everybody should follow the same syllabus in all parts of the country or, what seems more likely, should a working document be produced defining specified levels or criteria of achievement similar to the National and Draft Grade Criteria for GCSE? The model for German (November 1986) has already reduced the seven 'areas of competence' outlined in the French version to four and called them levels. This is the closest we have come so far to a set of national guidelines for graded achievement.

There are arguments for and against standardisation, however defined. In its favour is the advantage to pupils who move from one area to another and who do not have to confront a new syllabus as well as a new school. The general convenience implicit in a shared frame of reference where Level 2 is Level 2 is Level 2 is also clearly attractive. The fact that employers and other future users (of certificates) would more easily be able to recognise qualifications, speaks also for some form of uniformity.

On the other hand, one of the main strengths of the smaller, local initiatives has been the possibility of revision and evolution. This sort of flexibility and potential for growth and development might well disappear, if national or even regional syllabuses were implemented. It is possible to cite examples of schemes which have grown so big in terms of numbers of pupils involved, that it is virtually impossible to make revisions without major upset. Another benefit identifiable from a multiplicity of models is that of mutual advancement. This exchange of ideas from scheme to scheme has long been a positive feature of graded objectives development.

What follows are details of the attempts of one examining group to provide a regional framework of accreditation whilst at the same time allowing for local autonomy and flexibility for change.

In 1984/85 a record of achievement scheme was introduced on a trial basis in seven northern local education authorities under the title of the Northern Partnership for Records of Achievement. By 1987 this involved the five boards of the Northern Examining Association and 24 northern LEAs. The NEA issues Letters of Credit which list the units of work successfully completed by the learner. The LEA issues Statements of Achievement which specify exactly what the student has done in successfully completing the unit. In September 1984 the NEA set up a working group to see how graded tests in modern languages in the area could be fitted into this scheme. The principle was immediately established that the NEA did not wish to set up its own graded objectives scheme with defined syllabuses and assessment systems. It was considered important that the independence of the several schemes operating in the North should be respected as it was only in this way that they could continue to involve local teachers and respond to local needs. The report of the working group to the NEA stated this view very clearly:

> *'It was felt that what might be seen by some to be the major advantage of this approach - the establishment of generally recognised standards which could be certificated by the NEA and which might therefore have greater credibility to users - was far outweighed by the disadvantages - the loss of local control of the schemes which would result from the imposition of specified content for each level and the consequent stultifying of development.'*

After considerable discussion a set of criteria defining three levels was arrived at. A year's pilot scheme was set up in January 1987 to see if they were appropriate for the graded objectives schemes operating in the area.

The working group's introduction to the criteria sets out the principles:

Northern Partnership for Records of Achievement

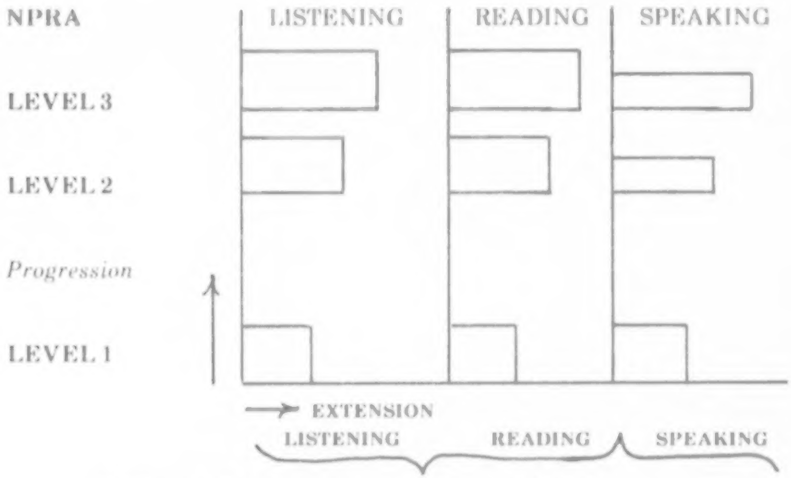
CRITERIA FOR THE ACCREDITATION OF GRADED TEST SCHEMES IN MODERN LANGUAGES

Introduction

In attempting an analysis of the nature of progression in the learning of a modern language, the Group has identified the following factors as those which may provide the most useful framework for the definition of criteria for different levels of achievement within an increasing range of situations.

- *a)* **Predictability**: *the extent to which the language and situations with which the learner is expected to cope are predictable.*
- *b)* **Independence, initiative and contribution**: *the extent to which the learner is expected to take the initiative in a given situation and to make his/her own contribution.*
- *c)* **Refinement, precision and clarification of language**: *the degree of refinement, precision and clarification of language which the learner is expected either to initiate or comprehend.*
- *d)* **Social interaction**: *whether the social interaction expected is at the level of making, developing or maintaining contact.*

Although those factors are listed separately, there is inevitably overlap between them. Each, however, may be seen as a continuum along which the learner would progress. The descriptions of the levels which are listed below indicate given stages in both extension and progression. Level 1 would require the vocabulary and skills of listening and reading and speaking as detailed below. Level 2 would extend all skills of listening and reading showing some progress from what would be expected at Level 1. Level 3 would show progress in all skills rather than merely extend existing skills (see the diagram below). Throughout it has been assumed that the foreign culture would be implicit in the schemes.



A diagram to show the extension and progression of skills from Level one to Level three in Graded Tests for Modern Languages.

A list of typical topics is given and then more detailed criteria. Those for Level 1 are:

> *'At this level the learner should be able to cope with largely predictable language needed in a limited number of situations to enable important specific details to be understood and given. At least four topic areas must be specified and defined in the syllabus by the centre or group of centres. Within the topic areas, the learner should be able:*
>
> LISTENING
>
> a) to comprehend aurally predictable language items which are initiated by a native speaker and to respond to them appropriately;
>
> SPEAKING
>
> b) to make superficial contact, for example, exchange basic greetings, give and/or understand personal information, carry out a range of short transactional tasks, consisting of single factual statements as defined in the syllabus, or elicit basic information involving largely predictable outcomes;
>
> c) to respond to requests for clarification and extension, picking from alternatives given;
>
> d) to indicate lack of comprehension and ask for repetition;
>
> READING
>
> e) to read and comprehend very short written items, relevant to the topics defined.'

Examples in English of the sort of language expected accompany each of the above criteria. Similar details are given for Levels 2 and 3.

Early experiences show that the criteria, with some adjustment, are capable of giving a standardised picture of achievement without imposing a standard framework of topics, functions, vocabulary and assessment techniques on the diverse schemes under consideration. If this does indeed prove to be the case it would seem to present one answer to the question of providing more widespread accreditation to locally organised graded objectives schemes.

V. WAYS FORWARD

PUPIL PROFILING

Pupil profiling and records of achievement are two relatively new features of the modern languages scene. The example included here is only one of several radical attempts to reappraise teaching and assessment in modern languages.

The Oxford Certificate of Educational Achievement is a joint venture between four Local Education Authorities (Coventry, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and Somerset) and the University of Oxford (Department of Educational Studies and the Delegacy of Local Examinations) to develop a system for the recording and certification of students' achievements. OCEA is one of the schemes receiving Educational Support Grant funding from the DES under the proposal for Records of Achievement for all school-leavers by 1990.

OCEA looks at learning from viewpoints which are expressed through its three components:

- Reviewing and recording provides a means whereby students can reflect on and record the whole range of their learning and development within and beyond the curriculum.
- Curriculum Areas (Modern Languages, Science, English and Maths) recognise achievements in these areas using specific criteria.
- The E-component (Examination component) provides a means whereby nationally or publicly recognised qualifications, and perhaps other school-based achievements, can be recorded.

Towards the end of the fifth year of secondary school, students' reviewing and recording summary statements will be transmitted to the Delegacy and, in the following Autumn, the final certificates of Educational Achievement will be produced. Each certificate will contain the reviewing and recording summary statement and all Curriculum Area information and E-component information available for a particular student.

OCEA is now in the second year of its two-year Pilot Phase. About 13,000 students in fifty centres are involved in the work. The pattern of involvement varies greatly from school to school - there are fifth formers involved in reviewing and recording; there is whole school involvement across the curriculum areas with schools from both the maintained sector and the independent sector; there is middle school involvement and special school involvement.

All these schools are providing invaluable information on the materials and processes related to OCEA through local reference groups, through school co-ordinators and through LEA Co-ordinators to the central committee structure of OCEA. As a direct result of this feedback, the research and development teams at Oxford, comprising seconded teachers, a member of the Department of Educational Studies and Delegacy staff have been working on revised materials which were published in May 1987.

OCEA Modern Languages

The development of OCEA Modern Languages reflects the important evolution which has taken place in Modern Languages teaching in schools over the past few years. This can be summed up in the phrase, the communicative approach.

It is now widely accepted that since the aim of learning language is to communicate in it, the best strategy for developing language competence is by encouraging real communication in the classroom as much as possible.

The communicative approach follows and to a large extent complements the graded test movement of the past ten years, in which measurable steps to language learning are rewarded along the way, as well as the final stage being recognised in a GCSE certificate. OCEA Modern Languages was initially designed to extend existing levels in any graded objectives' scheme. However, in line with the other OCEA curriculum areas the modern languages component has evolved as a task-based non age-related assessment framework which can record pupils' achievements in the foreign language throughout their secondary schooling.

It focuses on the communicative skills themselves rather than on the situational context in which they are used. Like all OCEA curriculum areas it does not specify syllabus content, so it can be integrated into any course the teacher may wish to use, provided there is scope for recognising communicative competence within it.

The Assessment Framework in modern languages

The assessment framework has been designed to:

- recognise that foreign language learning is concerned with students developing the ability to communicate effectively;
- encourage communication as the means and the end of foreign language learning through the use of task-based assessment;
- be used as an integral part of normal lessons;
- acknowledge the involvement of students in the learning process by allowing them to understand the curriculum and to review their progress through it;
- offer criterion-referenced statements which describe competence in foreign language use;

- enable students of all abilities, through the use of these criterion-referenced statements, to set and achieve realistic goals;
- provide an approach to assessment in which teachers can design tasks to develop students' ability to perform in mixed-mode activities whilst retaining discrete skill recording;
- support teachers in operating their own assessments based on communicative activities designed by them to fit the needs to these students..

How does OCEA Modern Languages work?

OCEA Modern Languages assesses the four modes of Talking, Writing, Listening and Reading either in single or mixed modes. Assessment is continuous and is recorded on the basis of communicative tasks and continuous observation of pupil performance in classroom activities.

Communicative tasks are based on plausible real-life situations giving rise to realistic tasks in which various language skills are used naturally. Such tasks are creative rather than mechanical. They involve the student in making decisions, and the language skills tested are seen as the means to an end in terms of the overall task.

e.g. an advertisement taken from a newspaper
'You are staying with friends in France and they want to take you out. Look at the advertisements of what is on, and jot down three places you would like to go to in order of preference. Be prepared to say why you prefer these.'

A situation is therefore created which the student is likely to relate to, and the task seems a natural one to do in this situation. It is, however, accepted that within the confines of the classroom there may be occasions when the task may not be 'authentic', for example a task involving students in a survey about their hobbies or pets, but such a task will stimulate genuine communicative language use and therefore is suitable for assessment. Thus, for a task to be communicative there must be a genuine purpose and an information gap where students need to exchange or process information.

Continuous observation of pupil performance involves assessment over a period of time of areas of pupil achievement in the foreign language in sub-skills such as intonation, vocabulary and appropriacy and in support skills such as using a dictionary. This form of assessment can take place during what can be termed non-communicative and pre-communicative activities.

A non-communicative activity is one in which the pupil practises a language structure which at that point has no evident communicative purpose - i.e. the pupil is involved in 'usage' of language rather than 'use' (Widdowson), e.g. a language drill using the parts of the verb *'avoir'*. A pre-communicative activity is one in which the pupil practises part of a complete communicative task and which involves 'use' of language as well as 'usage', e.g. practice of individual components leading up to a communicative task on the topic of shopping such as asking for different quantities of a variety of foods.

Assessment using the OCEA Modern Languages Framework

The Assessment Framework is divided into four modes of Talking, Writing, Listening and Reading. For each of these modes there is a criterion-referenced statement called Achievement 1: Communication Skills, which is obtained when the student successfully completes a Communicative Task. In Talking and Writing this is done by communicating the appropriate and relevant information, and in Reading and Listening it is done by extracting the appropriate and relevant information from a text. In Talking and Writing the quality of the performance is described by a series of free-standing, criterion-referenced statements which are collectively known as Achievement 2 (Conversation Management - Talking, Written Expression - Writing).

e.g. 'I can check the information given' - Talking
'I can use appropriate idioms' - Writing

The students' performance in these two modes is also assessed on sub-skills, the components of speech and writing which contribute to the students' overall performance: these are pronunciation, intonation, accuracy and appropriacy in Talking, and accuracy, organisational ability and appropriacy in Writing. Unlike Achievements, sub-skills are assessed on any language activities on a continuous basis throughout the learning process. This may include, for example, teacher-directed questions and answers with the whole class, pre-communicative activities and rehearsed student conversations. In order to provide a sensitive and positive way of monitoring progress, each sub-skill is divided into steps which record the stages a student passes through on the way to mastering the sub-skill. This profile of sub-skills can act as a diagnostic checklist which teachers can use to focus students' attention on how they can improve their performance.

These criteria provide a map of language achievement. But it is also important to recognise and encourage the back-up skills needed for successful language learning, for example using a dictionary or locating an item in an index. These skills are recognised as Support Skills.

The profile of pupil performance is further refined by a statement which sets out the level of difficulty of a task, thus giving a clear idea of the level of competence they have reached in the various Achievement Areas and sub-skills. This enables students' progress to be recognised in two different ways: their increasing mastery of skills when dealing with the same level of task, and the increasing complexity of the range of tasks they can handle. In Listening and Reading this is also cross-referenced with the difficulty of text called Text Groups.

Students build up Achievements and Sub-skills across a range of Topic Areas thus giving recognition to the body of knowledge acquired during the study of a foreign language.

Recording Assessments

It is a fundamental principle that both teachers and students should be able to monitor the students' progress and record their achievements using criteria which both understand. Thus, part of the impact will be in making explicit to students themselves what is required of them and helping them to understand and monitor their progress. OCEA Modern Languages provides recording methods for the students to keep themselves, as well as the more usual card for the teacher. These cards must be filled in as negotiated statements, under the guidance of a teacher. Thus, whilst these records are not entirely student-owned, they are not entirely teacher-owned either.

As an integral part of the lesson, the sheets serve to:

- remind students what they are aiming at;
- help them to record their progress;
- allow them to review the work they have covered;
- help them to remedy what they have not yet achieved.

At the end of a unit, a term, a year or a school career, these record sheets remind students of the topics they have covered, of the complexity of the tasks and texts they have encountered, and of the skills they have acquired.

In-service training and moderation

During the two years of the pilot phase INSET has played a vital role in the development of OCEA for teachers, and in providing feedback for the Research and Development groups preparing the Teacher Guide and Materials Pack for modern languages. Six aims of OCEA INSET can be identified as follows:

Familiarisation. The various INSET programmes aim first to familiarise teachers with the principles underlying OCEA discussion about the philosophy of a student-centred achievement record and the idea of a criterion-referenced assessment framework.

Teaching methodology. The next step is to look at the implications of OCEA for use in the classroom. With the strong emphasis that OCEA places on communicative teaching and the integration of reviewing and recording into the learning process teachers need to consider changes in teaching styles and syllabus design.

Production of materials. There are considerable implications for teachers using OCEA Modern Languages in terms of the production of materials. They will need to adapt existing materials and, in line with the task-based nature of assessment, have the opportunity to develop competence in task design.

Approaches. Once teachers are fully conversant with the implications of OCEA as far as teaching methodolgy and materials are concerned, there needs to be an in-depth consideration of ways and means of carrying out continuous assessment in the classroom as well as methods of recording pupils' achievements.

Interpretation of criteria. Closely linked with the above is the question of interpreting and criteria. Teachers need to discuss what they understand by the various assessment criteria, so that agreement can be reached and everyone concerned - students as well as teachers - can have the confidence of knowing that criteria mean more or less the same wherever they are applied.

The INSET Programme

There have been two main facets of this programme so far, firstly, authorities involved in the scheme have developed their own in-service courses. For example: in Oxfordshire one teacher from each pilot and associate school has been seconded one day a week to take part in an 'Assessment in Education' course held at Westminster College, Oxford. The course, run by the adviser and supported by the teacher seconded full-time to OCEA, has included a variety of activities looking at the principles of OCEA and its introduction into the classroom, and considerable preparation of teaching material and assessment tasks for use with students.

Secondly, agreement trials have been set up at three levels - national/local/departmental - with the aim of achieving a more or less uniform interpretation of the criteria across the authorities. Case studies have been devised to facilitate moderation. The purpose of this is to follow a single student over a period of time, so that a clearer idea can be gained of her/his achievement of the criteria. Some teachers have described these moderating exercises as the most useful form of INSET because they look at a student's work and apply the criteria together.

OCEA and other assessment schemes

The Assessment Framework has particular strengths in relation to GCSE and the development of appropriate schemes of work leading to this examination. It supports and enhances GCSE in the following ways:

- It complements GCSE by drawing on the same linguistic development in foreign language teaching both in Europe and in TEFL - the communicative approach.
- It supports notional/functional syllabus development.
- Its method of assessment clearly draws out the progress students make in particular language skills.

- Continuous assessment, together with reviewing and recording, can help students and teachers build up a profile to assist in final examination entries.
- Its task-design guidelines mean teachers can build up schemes of work based on authentic tasks.
- The tasks and criteria encourage the carefully progressive use of authentic resources.
- It augments examination-based courses by offering recognition of many classroom activities which do not figure in those examinations.
- It allows teachers to match their whole course closely to students' needs, rather than solely to the requirements of national criteria and examination test items.
- Assessments can develop from single-mode into mixed-mode tasks, as students' confidence and competence grow.

In modular courses with profiled elements and graded objectives schemes the framework offers considerable scope.

- In designing modules, OCEA's task-design framework promotes the development of coherent units of work. Its guidelines highlight the full communicative implications of language topics.
- The assessment criteria are sufficiently flexible to work with different course structures and teaching styles.
- The recording of language achievements is also based on student involvement and responsibility for learning. This helps to promote an awareness of their own personal development in the subject

The future

From Easter 1987 OCEA started the second phase of its development as a pilot scheme under the Educational Support Grant arrangements. The four participating LEAs intend to set up a joint management and development unit consisting of a full-time Director seconded from one of the OCEA partners and with the support of four LEA co-ordinators. The shift to a consortium arrangement will therefore place the four LEAs in a central role. This devolution may well lead to many more school or department-led initiatives. Careful scrutiny of such local developments will be necessary to guarantee the integrity of the OCEA project.

The new unit will undertake the day to day management of phase two of the project and some aspects of the development. Some of the work of the unit will consist of existing functions transferred from the Oxford Delegacy of Local Examinations and some will develop as a result of the work in the second phase. The unit staff will work in liaison with the staff of the Oxford Delegacy where it is expected that the central functions related to accreditation of LEAs, schools and colleges, moderation of criterion-referenced assessments, and formal certification of achievement will remain.

Ways forward

Production of teacher guides and accompanying materials for the four curriculum areas and the reviewing and recording component is now complete and both documents can be obtained from the Oxford Delegacy. It is, however, envisaged that these materials will be revised in the light of feedback from schools and colleges in the coming years.

The future role of the OCEA Modern Languages Framework

The OCEA Modern Languages Research and Development group are now looking at possible future developments and three main areas have been identified which provide exciting prospects for the way ahead in modern language teaching.

- There are now several initiatives to look at the possibility of developing a cross-curricular assessment system, and therefore to see what role the Modern Languages Framework might play in such a scheme.
- As the OCEA Modern Languages Framework is content-free there is clearly a role for such a flexible scheme in any modular course; e.g. Mode 3 GCSE, TVEI, CPVE, etc.
- Similarly, there is considerable scope for applying the Framework to community languages.

The OCEA Modern Languages Framework has an important role to play both in future developments in modern language teaching and in the overall school curriculum.

GOML AND GCSE

The graded objectives movement had a profound effect on the new national examination - GCSE - in a number of ways. From the beginning it had been envisaged that a series of tests of graded objectives would eventually have to interlock in some way with the national examinations (CSE and GCE 'O' level) usually taken in schools at about the age of 16. A complete replacement of the one by the other was suggested at the outset (Page, 1973) and this idea was updated in the context of the 16+ criteria debate (Report of Working Party No. 2, GOML Newsletter No. 5, 1981). While such radical but workable solutions were unfortunately never likely to be realised in quite that way, a growing number of groups were able to transform their Level 3 or 4 as appropriate into a CSE through the Mode 3 scheme which allows a CSE examination to be set and marked by an individual school, provided the syllabus is approved and the tests moderated by the examination board. The East Midlands graded objectives scheme was itself the creation of an examination board (EMREB) which set it up with a view to seeing how a series of tests of this sort could be validated and harmonised with the national system. In 1980 the Joint Matriculation Board formed a working party to produce a new syllabus and specimen tests for a combined CSE/'O' level 16+ examination. Several of the members of that group had been heavily involved in graded objectives schemes. Even before official steps to establish a new national examination had been taken, then, the graded objectives approach was firmly entrenched in parts of the official examination system. When therefore a national working party was formed to produce draft criteria for a new examination to replace GCE 'O' level and CSE many of its members and several of the examination boards had had first hand experience of working with graded objectives schemes.

The publication of the draft criteria in 1981 was followed by a national consultation which involved discussions at all levels from single departments in schools to local, regional and national meetings. All this took place in an atmosphere which was very favourable to communicative language teaching and assessment by tasks. The graded objectives movement had been a major contributor to that situation. The great discussion in fact arrived very appositely for the graded objectives movement since teachers with direct experience of devising new syllabuses and experimenting with new forms of tests were able to inject their knowledge into the discussions of the draft proposals at both local and national level. Recommendations from the Modern Language Association, the British Association for Language Teaching and others, contained statements that the new examinations should take the experience of graded tests into account. The national GOML committee submitted detailed comments. The final recommended statement that went to the Secretary of State for his approval therefore contained the sentence :

> *'It is hoped that it will be possible within the new system of examining to establish links with the graded tests which have so much influenced approaches to modern language teaching and examining.'*

The feelings of dissatisfaction with the current examinations which had given impetus to the graded objectives movement and which found wider expression during the consultation period had, as has been said, prompted some examination boards to explore possibilities even before the working party had been formed to produce drafts of national

The JMB formed a working party in 1980 with the intention of producing a new syllabus and specimen examinations for a combined CSE/GCE 'O' level. There had been in the North almost ten years experience of the 16+ examination run jointly by the JMB and the YREB (one of the local CSE boards). Later, the need of the York graded objectives group for a level equivalent to 'O' level and the wish of the JMB to test their specimen examination led to the two combining to run the examinations experimentally. In 1985 the examination, now a Mode 3 combined CSE/GCE 'O' level run by the York group as their Level 5, was officially recognised by the Board. The format is the usual one. The skills are tested separately and the testing techniques are similar to those already used in the York scheme. The examination has had a considerable influence. It forms the core of the new NEA GCSE syllabus and some of its papers were used as the specimens for that examination.

A new generation of Mode 3 GCSE proposals is arising, however, which suggest a different format. Two of the most prominent are continuations of the Cambridgeshire and EMREB schemes. Both break the convention of the current GCSE but respect the logic of their own graded objectives schemes in proposing systems which imply assessment of sections of the course over a period of two years.

The tasks in the Cambridgeshire scheme are divided into levels of difficulty as required by the national criteria - in this case two, Basic and Higher. Basic consists of six common core activity areas and a basic writing test, all equally weighted. The six common core activities are:

1. eating and drinking
2. entertainment
3. reading for information
4. coping with illness
5. visiting a school
6. holidays

Pupils work on an activity area for at least half a term and then take a test on it. Areas 1, 2, 4 and 6 are tested by simulations, each one consisting of eight tasks, similar to those described for the Cambridgeshire system earlier. It is interesting to note that in this case, however, the candidate is required to make notes in English to show that he has understood what he has read and heard and each candidate has a cassette on which his responses in the interview are recorded for subsequent moderation. As before, the candidate has half an hour in which to complete the given simulation and can make more than one attempt at it in that time. Activities 3 and 5 are tested and to relieve pressure on schools, candidates are tested on activity areas 3 and 5 as a class group. Area 5 is a reading and listening test which follows a logical sequence similar to that of the simulations, while tests in area 3 may, but do not necessarily, follow a logical sequence. Areas 3 and 5 are intended to supplement the listening and reading elements contained in the four simulations.

Candidates can also have further attempts at the activities at a later date. Results on these areas give access to GCSE Grades thus:

70% - Grade G
80% - Grade F
90% - Grade E

The basic writing test can be taken once the work on the simulations has been completed. A new proposal for basic writing has now been accepted for the 1989 examinations onwards. It will consist of a course-work folder containing ten examples of pupil's writing over two years, at least four of which must be done under test conditions. The other additional tests (Higher writing, reading, speaking and listening) are end of course separate skill tests.

The East Midlands joint GCE O/CSE examination which has now become a Mode 3 GCSE is also innovative. The examination is in modular form and is assessed over a period of four terms. Originally there were seven modules but the final version consists of five.

In Module 1 (basic speaking I) the learner acts as either an interviewer or interviewee (the roles are distributed randomly), either giving or eliciting personal information. A series of biographies in note form are provided for the interviewee. Module 2 (basic speaking II) involves the candidate in negotiating or interpreting in a transactional situation. These modules are assessed in terms 1 and 2 respectively of the four-term course. Module 3 is in four parts (basic listening, reading and writing and higher reading I and higher listening I). It involves various forms of interpreting tasks requiring comprehension of spoken and written French with responses in English. The basic writing is a response to a stimulus letter. Module 4 (higher speaking) requires the recapitulation and discussion of a newspaper article and radio report of the same event. Module 5 is in two parts (higher reading II and writing I, higher listening II and writing II). Written answers in French are required to questions posed in French on written and heard materials. These materials are assessed at various points in the spring and summer term of the final year of the course. A broad description like this makes the tests sound much more mundane than they in fact are. Each module is carefully placed in a communicative context by having the setting and role described on its title page as well as a general description of the task and the assessment criteria.

As in the Cambridgeshire scheme and illustrating one of the basic principles of GCSE, candidates for the Higher Grade must show themselves successful at the Lower one.

It is clear then that ideas derived from the graded objectives movement influenced both the national criteria and the syllabus details of the GCSE produced by the five examining groups. In the same way, the most pioneering of GOML groups are now showing how national examinations can go forward.

POST 16

The need for certification post 14 was two-fold. It was necessary to ensure continuity of syllabus for those already being taught within graded objectives schemes and wishing to continue with their study of a language anyway, but it was also essential to accommodate the increased numbers of pupils opting to continue with a foreign language into years 4 and 5, who might not otherwise have done so. In the same way increased numbers of students in full-time education post 16 has meant a continuation of the graded objectives philosophy into that field.

The growth of the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative (TVEI), a two-stage course from 14-18, and its post 16 counterpart, the Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (CPVE), has encouraged a development of the principles of short-term objectives into the 16-19 area.

The type of short-term objective coming into its own in this field is the modular curriculum unit, or more simply, the module. Depending on the allocation of time for modern languages over a two-year period, the most popular pattern has been with four or five modules of approximately 40 hours' teaching time each.

This figure represents one quarter of the time normally allocated to 'two-year' courses, both pre- and post 16 and so leads more naturally to four modules aggregating as one subject. Four is a convenient number for combination; it allows for double modules when appropriate and an even number is essential if the possibility of mixed year-group classes is to be exploited. 40 hours is long enough for students to get into the syllabus and short enough to retain immediate learning objectives. It avoids the proliferation of assessment for smaller modules, but it still allows the module to be broken up into smaller units.

This type of approach means that non-specialist students are more easily able to integrate a modern language into their timetable, thus relating languages more readily to the practical areas of business studies, communications and information technology for example.

One particular GOML scheme which has implemented the ideas of pre-vocational study programmes into its Graded Levels is that of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. This scheme has used the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Foreign Languages at Work (FLAW) Scheme to continue the practical teaching and learning of languages into the post 16 area. Whereas other schemes have used the option of Mode 3 'O' level to complete their programmes to 16+, Newcastle has chosen the FLAW scheme as its, notional at least, Level 5.

This group, now under the leadership of John Connor, Modern Languages Adviser, has sought to provide objectives and materials for a wide range of interests and abilities with the emphasis on practical uses of language in contexts related to the world of work and in particular on the ability to communicate effectively. Each unit contains spoken and written source materials, language practice materials designed to develop listening and reading skills in general.

Each unit of the syllabus is self-contained and can be taken as a separate module, although the following sequence is recommended.

1. Preparing for and arranging a visit to France
2. Travelling within France and settling in
3. Socialising
4. An introduction to the use of French in working contexts
5. The world of work in six specialised areas
6. Maintaining and developing contacts

UNIT I : By the end of this unit, students are expected, for example, to be able to:

- make arrangements over the phone to go to France ;
- deal with phone enquiries from France and take messages;
- confirm arrangements in writing;
- alter arrangements;
- point out basic locations and geographical features of France;
- talk briefly about local and national government in France.

UNIT II : By the end of this unit, students are expected, for example, to be able to:

- use all forms of public transport in France;
- find out about a town or region;
- hire a car;
- travel around by car;
- cope with breakdowns;
- talk about where they come from and a region of France;
- act as a car-hire receptionist.

UNIT III : By the end of this unit, students are expected, for example, to be able to:

- voice opinions about things which interest them;
- agree, disagree, approve, disapprove;
- compare places, music, food, prices, etc;

- play pelote;
- understand French computer terminology;
- act as an interpreter in basic conversation.

UNIT IV : By the end of this unit, students are expected, for example, to be able to:

- open a bank account in France;
- apply for jobs and cope with interviews;
- act as a hotel receptionist;
- act as a guide in a town;
- compare and discuss different sets of data;
- write a CV in French
- prepare 'copy' for advertisements.

UNIT V : By the end of this unit, students are expected, for example, to be able to have a fairly detailed knowledge of one, or superficial knowledge of several of the following areas:

- working in a French bank;
- working as a secretary in a French/English context;
- working in a hotel or restaurant in France;
- operating a travel business or working in the tourism area in France and/or England;
- casual work in France.

UNIT VI : By the end of this unit, students are expected, for example, to be able to:

- undertake successfully simulations and communicative tasks drawn from all the previous units;
- undertake open-ended tasks which will require them to pursue, on an extended basis, a particular non-linguistic objective.

An example of the latter might be:

> *You work for ITT travel in Newcastle. Your boss has given you the responsibility of identifying, pricing and advertising adventure holidays for young French and English children, aged 13-17, in activity centres in England and France. You have delegated the English side of things to a junior colleague. You have identified a contact in France (the French assistant, friendly native speaker, teacher, etc) who should be able to help you. The end result should be a leaflet in French giving basic details of the holidays and an audio-cassette giving more details of your proposals.*

or

> *Your boss has asked you to investigate the possibility of importing six company cars direct from Brussels. You have established contact with a Belgian Ford dealer. Make the necessary arrangements!'*

West Sussex is another well-established GOML group, whose 'GOALS' scheme provides five levels of French up to Mode 3 'O' level (shortly to become GCSE extended)/four levels of German to what will be the basic GCSE, and two levels of Spanish. As a continuation of these syllabuses a post 16 TVEI course has been developed for implementation in September 1987. A possible model has been included at the end of this section to demonstrate how modern languages could be integrated into a TVEI core.

The teacher seconded to develop this course, for French in the first instance, saw her role as attempting to find common ground between the notion of a communicative methodology, which has found increasing currency in modern language classrooms over recent years, and that of active learning which has become a feature of curriculum development in general.

The general focus of the resultant topic-based course is that the message to be communicated is of more importance than the medium via which it is transmitted. In other words, there is an emphasis on effective communication rather than absolute accuracy. The student is thus required to develop re-wording or paraphrasing skills and to concentrate on the task or assignment in hand, with the language itself used as a vehicle for completing that task.

As a hallmark of this approach, students tend to work in pairs or small groups, exchanging information in a meaningful way, persuading others or making consensus decisions. As a result the role of the teacher becomes less central, with him or her acting more as organiser and facilitator.

An integral part of the course will involve a tapelink with St Maixent l'Ecole, Horsham's twin town. Communicating through tapes, students will build a dossier on various aspects of life in St Maixent outlined in the course content. There is also a plan for students to produce a video tape and booklet to promote the region in which they live. Students will also be able to build their own tailor-made courses by access to an assignment bank made up of up-to-date authentic materials covering the personal, commercial and vocational topics. The course will culminate ideally in an exchange visit between the two groups of students.

A third example of a GOML group operating a vocationally-oriented post-16 syllabus is the Hertfordshire French Certificate for the World of Work, which is in fact a free-standing programme, not directly related to the Hertfordshire Foundation Course.

French for the World of Work operated as a Hertfordshire scheme from 1983-85 and was adopted by the East Anglian Examinations Board as a CSE (Mature)/CEE for 1986 and 1987. The LCCI has also approved the scheme for FLAW accreditation.

Details of targetting and course content can be obtained from the board, but some particularly interesting features of the scheme are given below.

The oral test

Part 2, the telephone call, involves both an information gap and an element of surprise. The candidates have to make a call, requesting certain information, which they then report back to the person role-playing their boss. This might in part consist of proper names, of which candidates have to request spellings, or telephone numbers. Some element of negotiation is inherent in this call, for instance because the French counterpart was not available on certain dates. Candidates are encouraged to ask for repetition and clarification until certain they have all the facts correct.

In the year 1984 the oral examination was conducted with two examiners, one role-playing the telephone correspondent and the other the English boss who received the message in English. This not only provided an authentic situation but allowed the one not engaged with the candidate to assess the performance.

Writing

Dictionaries were allowed for reading, writing and oral preparation. The guidelines for the letter writing are closely defined and cover a limited repertoire of texts. It was not felt desirable that candidates should be misled into thinking it acceptable to send out on headed paper letters which, although good efforts, had a number of mistakes in them. Nor was there a wish to imply that candidates were necessarily competent to write letters which could commit their firms and organisations legally and financially.

The LCCI is only one of several examining bodies which offer suitable accreditation for the type of post-16 courses discussed here, and although the FLAW scheme is one of the better known, a wide variety of examinations, generally with at least a vocational if not a wholly specialist slant, are available as an alternative to the more traditional type of validation, and usually with differentiated levels. The Languages for Business examinations in French, German and Spanish are designed, at three levels, for the general interest and general business learner. The wholly oral 'Foreign Languages for Industry and Commerce' (FLIC) examinations are designed at four levels for those preparing for, or following, a specific business or industrial career. They can be taken in any language at any time of the year by arrangement. The Secretarial Language examinations are designed at three levels for the professional bilingual secretary, the first level approximating to 'A' level.

The Royal Society of Arts revised its syllabuses along communicative lines in 1984 and at present has three levels of German, Spanish and Italian and fourth French. The RSA's language examinations have traditionally been directed at the post-16 market with their syllabuses oriented towards an adult audience.

These examinations are enjoying increased take-up in sixth forms and tertiary colleges as a useful form of accreditation for non-specialists who cannot or do not wish to follow a full 'A' level programme in a language. The first two levels are equivalent to graded syllabuses prior to 'O' level or GCSE, requiring approximately 50-60 hours study for Level 1 and 120-150 for Level 2. French Level 4, which approximates to 'A' level, is designated a Threshold Level after which the student should be competent enough to work or study in the country.

The Society also offers a number of specialist syllabuses, two of which exist at more than one level. These are for catering and international trade, one level respectively although of greatly differing standards, office workers and receptionists (two levels) and secretaries (three levels).

The graded examinations of the Institute of Linguistis are at four levels and cover the range from GCSE to professional and graduate level.

The higher levels of the Institute's examinations are orientated towards specialist learners. The new certificate level is also often taken alongside vocational courses, for example for secretarial linguists, students on hotel and catering courses, business administration or overseas trade courses.

The other public organisation offering certification at different levels for languages post 16 is the Business & Technician Education Council (BTEC). Modern language units in BTEC programmes can, however, be free-standing, for example where languages are studied 'ab initio' in Higher award programmes. Generally, a basic minimum of 60 hours' study is stipulated for any unit.

The first qualifications have replaced the old General and are available as an alternative to CPVE at post 16. The BTEC National approximates to 'A' level and the Higher National to pass degree level, although any languages component would not necessarily correspond to a specialist qualification at this level.

Further information may be obtained from:

Business & Technician
Information Services
Education Council
Central House
Upper Woburn Place
London WC1H 0HH
Tel : 01-388 3288

The Institute of Linguists
Educational Trust
Mangold House
24a Highbury Grove
London N5 2EA
Tel : 01-7445/6386

The London Chamber of
Commerce and Industry
Examinations Board
Marlowe House
Station Road
Sidcup
Kent DA15 7BJ
Tel : 01-302 0261

The Royal Society of Arts
Examinations Board
8 John Adams Street
London WC2N 6EZ
Tel: 01-930 5115

APPENDIX 1

THE TVEI CORE: A HYPOTHETICAL EXAMPLE

YEAR 3

<table>
<tr><td>WEEKS</td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr>
<tr><td>10%</td><td colspan="2" rowspan="2">ORIENTATION</td><td colspan="5">STUDY SKILLS
(4 groups)</td><td rowspan="2">COUNSELLING</td><td colspan="5">Control Technology
Media Education
Keyboarding/Wordprocessing
Discrimination and Prejudice</td><td rowspan="2">COUNSELLING</td></tr>
<tr><td>20%</td><td colspan="5">TECHNOLOGY
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS</td><td colspan="5">Choice of cross curricular assignments (3 groups)</td></tr>
</table>

<table>
<tr><td>WEEKS</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr>
<tr><td>10%</td><td colspan="3" rowspan="2">WORK EXPERIENCE/
MINI ENTERPRISE</td><td colspan="5">SURVIVAL SKILLS
MODERN LANGUAGES 1
DESIGN
PERSONAL FINANCE</td><td rowspan="2">COUNSELLING</td><td colspan="5">Aeronautics
International Relations
Modern Languages 2
Data Bases</td></tr>
<tr><td>20%</td><td colspan="5">TECHNOLOGY
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS</td><td colspan="5">Choice of cross curricular assignments (3 groups)</td></tr>
</table>

YEAR 3 (ctd)

WEEKS	29 30 31 32 33	34	35	36 37 38 39 40
10%	SURVIVAL SKILLS MODERN LANGUAGES 1 DESIGN PERSONAL FINANCE	RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE	COUNSELLING	Alternative Technology Other Cultures Work Spread Sheets Modern Languages 2
20%	TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PERSONAL EFFECTIVENESS			Choice of cross curricular assignment (3 groups)

YEAR 4

WEEKS	1 2 3 4 5	6 7 8	9	10 11 12 13 14
10%	SURVIVAL SKILLS MODERN LANGUAGES 1 DESIGN PERSONAL FINANCE	WORK EXPERIENCE/ MINI ENTERPRISE	COUNSELLING	Comparative Religion Instrumentation Graphics Media Education
20%	POLITICAL EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY'S INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY			Choice of cross curricular assignments (2 groups)

YEAR 4 (ctd)

WEEKS	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
10%	SURVIVAL SKILLS MODERN LANGUAGES 1 DESIGN PERSONAL FINANCE					RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE	MOCK EXAMINATIONS	COUNSELLING	Modern Languages 3 Viewdata Discrimination and Prejudice Alternative Technology				
20%	POLITICAL EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY'S INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY								Choice of cross curricular assignments (2 groups)				

Notes : *1. Modules in capitals are compulsory, others optional.*
2. The titles of modules are possible examples only and therefore liable to change.
3. The example is based on a cohort size of 54 using a staffing ratio of 1:16.

VI. THE NEXT STEP

The rapid spread of the graded objectives movement was due to two factors characteristic up till now of the British education system: the freedom of teachers to teach how and what they will and their willingness to spend many hours of their own time on cooperative endeavours to improve their professional expertise for the good of their pupils. National education policies currently under discussion and likely to be implemented in the late eighties and early nineties will probably mean that both of these factors will either be severely diminished or possibly disappear altogether. It seems probable that the discussions about a national curriculum will result in the designation of a group of foundation subjects whose syllabuses will be centrally determined. These subjects will be tested at pupil ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16. Only the latter two ages concern foreign language teaching but even then, nationally devised tests at ages 14 and 16 as well as the GCSE examination usually taken at age 16+ will probably severely limit scope for innovation and experiment by individual teachers. They will no longer have the same freedom to teach how and what they will.

Similarly, the decision to state exactly how many hours a year teachers are expected to spend on their work makes the present flexible situation much more difficult to maintain. Will time spent on working on syllabuses and tests for graded objectives schemes count as contracted time or not? It seems clear that if the new circumstances that are likely to obtain in the late eighties had existed in the late seventies, the graded objectives movement would never have flourished as it has. Since, however, the graded objectives movement is strong and respected, it should be able to influence the nature and content of national syllabuses. It is vital that these, while fulfilling their perfectly proper function of ensuring that all school pupils throughout the country are presented with roughly the same opportunities, should be flexible enough to allow for experiment by teachers either as individuals or in small groups. This is the only way that practical and fruitful experimentation can lead to innovation. The danger is that national syllabuses may become a straitjacket which inhibits curriculum development; teachers who have experience of graded objectives schemes must make sure that that does not happen.

◆

Provided these dangers can be avoided the future for graded objectives schemes looks bright. There are several growth points evident in the current situation. The most important would seem to be:

1. the move towards continuous assessment along with the recognition of the need for repeated performance;
2. the ways in which learner autonomy is being developed along with negotiation by teacher and taught about the content and progress of learning;
3. the greater official recognition of graded objectives schemes.

These three tend to be intertwined.

The relationship of GOML and the national examinations at 16+ (the old CSE and GCE 'O' level and the new GCSE) has always been uneasy because of a fundamental difference in approach. Graded objectives aim at providing a qualification based on successful accomplishment of a task; national examinations aim at providing seven grades of success based on the amalgamated marks derived from a series of tasks. Nevertheless, through the Mode 3 system, graded objectives groups have been able to obtain official recognition of their higher levels by having them validated as CSE or GCE 'O' level equivalents. The situation is now becoming even more favourable. Although the present GCSE in modern languages still imposes a final examination with seven grades of outcome, it has been constructed so that grades can to some extent be described in terms of tasks successfully accomplished. To that extent it is nearer the graded objectives philosophy. The indications are that the GCSE in modern languages will, over the next few years, follow the original intentions of the GCSE as a whole and include continuous assessment. This will make the system much more flexible and so make the integration of graded objectives schemes easier. Already, as we have seen, graded objectives schemes have been devised as Mode 3 GCSEs which are modular in construction and are designed to be assessed over a year or more. This is a trend which should develop and flourish.

Favourable circumstances are also provided by Records of Achievement schemes and TVEI, BTEC and other similar courses. Continuous assessment is a feature of Records of Achievement systems which represent another way in which graded objectives schemes can gain official recognition without losing their independence. The pilot scheme set up in Yorkshire, while providing loose descriptions of levels to which graded objectives schemes of various sorts can conform without losing their identity, provides a certificate validated by the NEA, one of the five official examining groups. Pupil autonomy and the negotiation of what is to be learnt is a principle often found in TVEI, BTEC and other systems based on assignments. Graded objectives groups can benefit from being involved both from the point of view of widening their experience of assessment techniques and also as a way of gaining official recognition.

Graded objectives schemes have contributed a great deal to new thinking not only about modern language learning but also about learning in general. They developed because they responded to the needs of teachers and learners seeking more satisfying and relevant courses. The official climate is now much more sympathetic to similar ideas and the opportunities for the further development and support of graded objectives schemes were never more favourable. While accepting official recognition and support it is vital, however, that teachers retain the initiative where syllabus design and assessment techniques are concerned. The evidence of the last ten years shows that the creativity of teachers in these fields is immense and all-important. They are the ones who have the necessary experience to take ideas further over the next ten years and beyond.

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Abbreviations: AVLJ = Audio-Visual Language Journal; BJLT = British Journal of Language Teaching; ML = Modern Languages; MLS = Modern Languages in Scotland; TES = Times Educational Supplement.

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Graded Objectives in Modern Languages have contributed more to reform and development in the teaching of modern languages in this country than any other single movement.

Over the past ten years the introduction of shorter-term goals into modern languages programmes has revolutionised the way in which a large number of teachers think about what should be taught to their pupils and, progressively, how it should be taught.

In this brand-new edition, Brian Page and Derek Hewett set out in detail where graded objectives have come from, what is happening now in terms of the latest developments in syllabus design, methodology and assessment, and finally where the movement is going, particularly in the light of GCSE and other developments.

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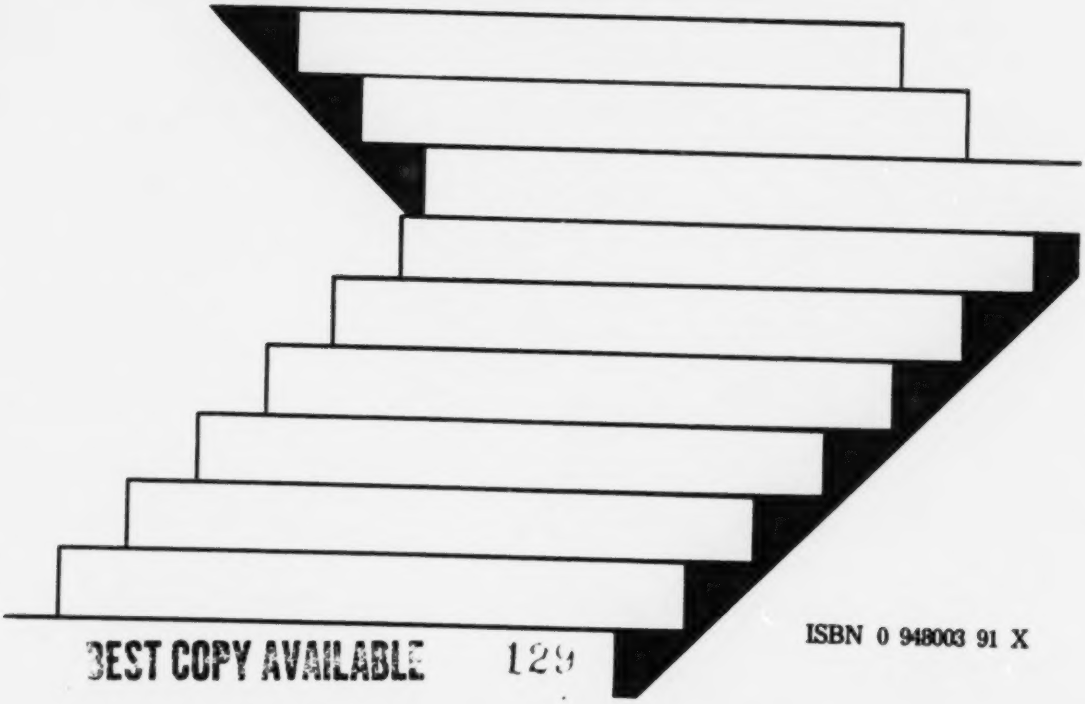

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